

A CALL  
TO  
BACK-SLIDERS

OR  
A Supplement unto the  
VOICE OF THE ROD.

By the same ~~AUTHOR~~.

*Matthew Venn*

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Jerem. 4: 1. If thou wilt return, O Israel, saith the Lord, return unto me: and if thou wilt put away thine abominations out of my sight: then shalt thou not remove.

Chap. 13: 17. But if ye will not hear it, my soul shall weep in secret places for your pride, &c.

Ver. 27. Wo unto thee, O Ierusalem! wilt thou not be made clean? when shall it once be?

Ver. 22. And if thou say in thine heart, wherefore come these things upon me? for the greatness of thine iniquity are thy skirts discovered and thy heels made bare.

Τοιούτων ἡ ἀμαρτία πρὶν ἢ ἀπαρτιοῦναι μέλει τοῦ αἰλέναι. Chrysost.

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[illegible]

The  
A U T H O R S  
A P O L O G I E.

**S**uch is the blockish stupidity and blind prejudice that hath rooted it self in the very heart of a Back-sliding generation, that the most seasonable and serious Advice hath need of an *Apologie* to vindicate its attempt, and to mediate its acceptance. Yet if this will, do, we will not bethink our adventure. Should we consult our present Ease, Safety, Advantage, or Credit with most men; we might save all this labour. And the truth is, considering the general temper and spirit of this degenerate age we live in, and the miserable success which the most faithful and painful endeavours of this nature have been wont to meet with; we are sometimes ready to throw up all, as being weary and ashamed of *beating the air, and labouring in the fire*; while the

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we get by it is but the *ashes* and *sparkes* in our own eyes. But hoping that there may be a *gleaning*, an *ear* or two, here and there; though not to fill our hands, yet a little to refresk our hearts; we willingly offer our selves in Gods *harvest*, and devote our *All* (if this *All* be any thing) to the service of the *Temple*. And though indeed *Origen's* wish would not sound well from such a *No-thing*, as I: *Utinam esset possibile, me unum esse ex principibus offerre gemmas, &c.* I would it were possible, that I might be as one of the *Princes* to offer *Jewells*. Yet may I but present a paine of *Turtles*, or a hand-ful of *Goates-hair*: May I but fasten a *Lock* or drive a *Nail*, it shall be enough for me. If my jangling the *Bells*, (as one saies) may but call in better *ringers*; I will not repent of my paines.

I am not ignorant of the *snarlings* of some, who beare little good will to my person or cause: nor of the *slanders* of others that falsely accuse me of (it may be) their own fault: nor of the *tacite muttering* of others that condemne my  
scrib.

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scribbling fancy, as *Phœbus* chocks his  
 found. *Magnapotis, - & quæ non viri-* *Ouid. Metam.*  
*bus istis Munera conveniunt.* I confess,  
 this is enough to make me blush, I can-  
 not but be conscious of my own insuffi-  
 ciency. *Mecum habito, & novi quàm*  
*fit mihi curata supellex.* But yet me  
 think, I have something to offer, as  
 (1.) that which is trite, and I think,  
 true; That in times of Heresy and gene-  
 ral defection, it concerns every one ac-  
 cording to his power and place, both  
 privately and publickly to offer his best  
 assistance to reclame those that are  
 straying either in judgment or practice.  
 (2) I cannot be ignorant that there are  
 enough that keepe the presses employed,  
 and more than enough, that employ  
 them to bad purpose. But in this scrib-  
 bling age why may not I say with the Sa-  
 tyrist:

--- *Stulta est clementia, cum tot ubi* *Juvon.*  
*Vatibus occurras, peritura parcere*  
*chartæ.*

*It is but foolish pity,*  
*When as thou see'st the citty,*

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*In every street, with bawling Poets  
broyld,  
To spare the paper, which will else be  
spoyld.*

But suppose there are enough of such as know how to place their words as apples of gold in pictures of silver ; are not these good helps in your way ? and if so , it were foull disingenuity to with-hold them , and ingratitude to contemn or nauseat them ; me thinks a *store* here, should be no more a *sore*, than in your barnes, your fields, your shops, &c. (3.) And what though the whole body of Divinity both *practical* and *polemical* be almost every where extant, in entire systemes and particular tractates and broken fragments ; yet we see that new *Books*, like new fashions, are taken up at first with affection ; but after a while they grow stale, and become some of the *Lumber* of the house. There are many ( I think ) would read little, were not new Books (like fresh *Dishes*) ever and anon serv'd into their hands. *Utile est plures libros à pluribus fieri diverso stylo, non diversa fide, ut*  
ad



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*ad plurimos res ipsa perveniat, ad alios  
sic, ad alios autem sic.* The several cir-  
culations of spiritual humors in the my-  
stical body of Christ, though in different  
methods and degrees, do all finally con-  
spire to the proportional growth of the  
whole, and every part nourished with a  
Chyle, appropriated to its nature and  
quality. The variety of qualifications  
in the Teachers matches that variety of  
capacities and genius's in the learners.  
Besides, (4) there are old barkes daily  
going off the stage; there is a continual  
leaking and wast, which calls for an an-  
swerable supply to keep all full, as the  
sea, by receiving from the rivers what it  
spends on the fountains. And why is  
not a new, and it may be, more clean  
and correct edition of an old truth, as  
profitable and pleasant as the new im-  
pression of an old book? Nay, (5)  
doubtless the church is capable of im-  
provement in her *Dogma*, as well as  
*Practicks*; and how shall this improve-  
ment appear, or be furthered, but by the  
labours of those that are exercis'd in it?  
and those, by how much the more pu-  
blique,

i. e. Many  
taught both  
Theoretical  
and practi-  
cal not yet  
clearly un-  
derstood  
nor agreed  
upon.



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blique, by so much the more successful. I think I am not out in my observation, nor is it mine only that hell and Rome never received such fatal shot from the pulpit as from the press. And (6) why should we be grudg'd that liberty and privilege, which the former generations have so thriv'd under? Again (7) *vox audita perit, &c.* our writings may be seen and read, when our voices cannot be heard, these may preach where and when the Author cannot, yea, when he is not, and, it may be, more successfully. The death of the person sometimes puts life into those surviving pledges of his cure and service. Thus it was with our Lord and Master: and so it often fares with his servants, while alive we are persecuted; but when dead we are prized. The husbandmans seed must first die before it spring again. Nay (8) hath not God given us hands to glorify him with, as well as tongues? and why then should not these do their parts in that service we owe both our Maker, our Redeemer, and our brethren? And (9) what is it we plead for? but the commu-

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communicating of that which is good, which is the property of every *newborn* good man to do? If the grain be good, it doth better in the market, than in the garner. A general rain in a dry and barren season is a thousand times richer, than a small scat that sprinkles but a few fields. The press is *Longimanus*, hath a larger reach, a more extensive faculty than the pulpit. Besides (10) the publique appearance of our doctrine may, in all sober breasts, the more effectually exonerate us of the jealousies and hard censures where with we are loaded. And (11) that we may leave a testimony on record, for the conviction of this, and the admonition of succeeding generations, concerning our doctrine and principles, which seem to some of the present Age so very intolerable. Lastly, we know that the people must one day be call'd to an account for what they have heard. Oh! me thinks I hear poor souls groaning in every corner, under the weakness of their judgments, the drossiness of their affections, the unfaithfulness of their memories,

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and the deep sense of that dreadful Day which is shortly approaching. *What would we give if we might read again, at our leisure, what at such or such a time we heard! How are we like to account hereafter, for that which seems to be already gone, as if we had never heard it!* Now here's a proper remedy in such a case, which through the blessing of God may happily promote our comfortable appearance in that great day. On such considerations as these, being mov'd to commit something to publique service, in witness of my unfeigned love to and care of immortal souls; and especially theirs unto whom I have been mote peculiarly related, I could not one serious deliberation divert my thoughts to a more seasonable choice; than of something, whereby I might antidote the reigning *Pest* of the times, wherein if I may do any thing to good purpose, I shall account my self crown'd with the wished success of my most ambitious desires.

Mistake me not, courteous Reader! I am not apologizing here for every pamphlet or libel whose design may be  
to

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to reproach authority, or to strengthen parties. There is too much of this Antichristian spirit insinuating it self under formes of Godliness. Too much of this strange fire, not only in the private hearts of factions vulgar breasts; but even in the *Censers* of the sanctuary, which should be *Holiness unto the Lord*. Nor yet dare I condemn all for Pamphleteers, that modestly and loyally, though faithfully and sharply declaim against the growing and ominous Abominations of the age they live in. For my own part I can heartily say with *Augustine*. *In omnibus meis scriptis non modopium lectorem sed & liberum correctorem desidero*. If I offend any where through ignorance, præcipitancy or im-mannerlyness, and the offence appear *consideratis considerandis*, all circumstances being duly weighed, either cover it, or correct it in the spirit of meakness.

I cannot be unsensible, that I have to do with tender, jealous, conceited and stubborn spirits; so that it's a hard matter to touch a sore, and yet to escape a fling of the heel. But what says *Seneca*?

*Cupio*

Senec. 22.

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*Cupio si fieri potest, propitiis auribus, quod sentiam dicere; sin minus, dicam & iratis.* I hope the subject will be generally voted *seasonable*; and if so, I doubt not but it will be *acceptable* with those that are not yet too blind to discern the signs and sins of the times. If ever there were a generation of Back-sliders in *England* (not to mention other churches) since the first reception of the Gospel here, I hope I do no one any wrong to think that we are the persons. Not that I condemn all; God forbid I should be so uncharitable. I doubt not but that God hath a remnant of *Joshuas* and *Catebs* spirit among us, who desire to walk with him fully. But as for the generality of men, I cannot look upon them but as such as are deeply involv'd in this guilt: specially considering what we are fallen from, and what we are fallen into.

- I. I. As for the first; Might I be free to speak my thoughts, it seems to me, that *England* never staid her beauty, nor fell more shamefully, than of late shee hath done. But to prevent all mischievous surmisings here; give me leave to tell  
you,



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you, in what respects I take it so to be.

1. I do not say, nor do I think that our late civil change from an illegal traitorous Usurpation to our rightful and pristine Monarchy, was any part of our fall; but that which (had we but the grace or wit to improve it as we should) might be the glory and munition of these poor kingdoms. Nay, I take this to be not the least stop of our advancement, which makes our fall (through the abuse of it) the sadder.

2. Nor need I mention from what we are fallen in respect of *secular interest*, or eternal enjoyments: the merchant and artificer as well as the husbandman and the poor are somewhat sensible of this, and I think, will easily graunt that they are miserably fallen: and by their *fall* the very bones and sinewes of this mighty *animal* (as the Duke of Roan calls *England*) are broken. But this, being in it self penal, not sinful, but the effect of some other and sadder *fall*, it comes not within the compass of our design at present to insist on it. Only let me add, that wise men will by the effect  
be



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beled to the consideration of the cause. And that national punishments do claim parentage of national sins, I hope we have so much Divinity yet left us as to confess.

3. 3. If we look upon the Lords-Day, may we not see from whence we are fallen, was there not a time when the Lords day was in better credit, and more strictly observed than of late it hath been? The truth is, I think *England* was once the glory of the whole earth in this respect, when the reines were held close on the necks of such as made no great conscience of hallowing or prophaning it; but is it so still? Time was, when it was accounted a reproach for a minister not to lay out himself to the uttermost with all possible seriousness, affection and gravity in his ministerial work for the promoting of the power of godliness among his people, and the strengthening of the interest of Religion in the hearts and lives of men, which hath such an immediate and essential dependance on the right observation of the Lords-Day. Time was, when it was accounted

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ed scandalous for persons to confine all their sabbath-duties and devotions to the houres and places of publique assembly, and not to improve the residue of their time in the more private exercises of worship. Time was when masters and parents would have been asham'd, that their children or servants would have been seen to gadd about the streets or fields, or spending their time loosely or carelessly on the Lords day, but would see them exercis'd in repeating, praying, singing, reading or catechizing. Time was when taverns and tippling-houses durst not be so frequented, nor warrs bought and sold, nor burdens carried and recarried, nor plays and pastimes accounted tollerable on the Lords holy day. I am (I confesse) apt enough to think, that many are the worse now, for the restraints that were on them then. But whose fault is that? I hope you are not thinking; that I am so utterly forsaken of common sense and honesty, as to go about to excuse all that was done and villanously perpetrated in those days, under high pretences of holiness and

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and zeal, by a self-seeking, Jesuit-ridden  
partie, I abhor all such counsels and  
practices ; yet that which was good is  
good still ; Reformation was never the  
worse nor the rather to be slighted, for  
that a rotten hearted, bloody *Jehu* had  
had the hands of it.

4. 4. If we look on the whole body and  
state of Religion in general, may we not  
discern that we have lost ground, and  
that both in the Dogmatical and Practi-  
cal part of it? How thin are those sown  
in the earth that are of a much better  
than *Gallio's* spirit, that lay the interest  
of Religion to heart above all interests  
of their own? May we not put the Pro-  
phets words in the abstract, and say,  
righteousness perisheth, and no man  
layeth it to heart, merry it self is taken a-  
way, none considering the evils that  
these things portend? But to evidence  
this more particularly,

5. 5. If we look on great men, are we  
like to find any great cause to rejoyce in  
the growth or gain of Religion? It were  
well if we had not but too much reason  
to take up the prophets complaint,

*Jer.*

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*Jer. 5. 5. They have altogether broken the yoke and burst the bonds.* Time was when it was accounted the glory of a gentleman to shew his zeal for Godliness, to encourage and promote it, and to second the sword of the Lord with the sword of Gideon, for the beating down of vice, and ungodliness. Time was when swearing, and whoring, and drunkenness, and sabbath-breaking were accounted wickednesses that ought not to go unpunished. Certainly what ever mens principles or ends were, these things were good, and though (I confess) I cannot speak bad enough of these times in some respects, yet what was good must not be denied: I would to God we had been so happy and so true to the Protestant interest, as to have promoted the work of Reformation by a wise and sober regulation of former disorders, innovations and abuses, and a zealous prosecution of that which was commendable and good. But this is the humour of *Englishmen*; they account there is no Reformation, but by tearing all in pieces.

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6. 6. If we look on all trades and occupations among men, and diligently observe them in all their ways and practices, are we like to find reason to bless them, for what they have don for the honour of religion: hath conscience, truth and plain dealing repaired any of its decayed credit with them of late? is lurking, lying, equivocating, &c. bannish't from their shops and commerces, or pride and luxury from their backs and bellies, any further than ever it was? Or have not the late difficulties of the times and longer experience in their crafts furnish'd them with new methods and subtilty to deceive? I think there are but few that find not reason to tell me their *trades* are grown less *profitable*, and I doubt there are not many, but might find an examination of themselves, that one reason is that the *traders* are grown less *conscionable*.

7. 7. If we look on the generation that is like to succeed us, for my own part I can see but little reason to rejoice. When God by his Prophet begins to recapitulate with his people and to remind them

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them of some former transactions in the course of his providence towards them, he mentions this, *Ezek 18. 21. I said unto their children in the wilderness, walk ye not in the statutes of your fathers, neither observe their judgments, notwithstanding the children rebelled against me.* I would that any one could, on good grounds, give me better hope of the children of the present generation. It's a hard matter and a rare thing for children in times of licentiousness to escape the pollutions of their parents, or the worst of their companions. Both reason and experience tells us, none are so apt to be tainted, as the tender youth; and to say no more, if they escape better now, as to their morals, than they are wont to do in times of contagious diseases, as to their health, it will be a thing that I should delight to wonder at.

2. As for the second; What we are 2. fallen into, I shall not add much here, to what is already said, and what is further prepared in the following discourse. It is certain, we are fallen, and



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that neither on plain ground, nor on clean. I need not make the report; our own groans proclaim (what ever the matter be) that all is not well, go where you will, (unless it be to them that are wont to fare best, when it goes worst with their neighbours) and you shall hear men complaining, something or other fits amiss; either what they fail or what they fear, and (which is the misery) few are sensible of what worst ailes them. May I descend to particulars.

I. Are we not fallen into a breach (I was about to have said, an irreparable breach) of union? and how wisely some on both sides have endeavoured a reduction or accommodation, is not my business now to consider. I design not the defense of this, or that, or the other sect or perswasion; I think we have all reason enough to cover the lip and to cry unclean. Doubtless there is fault enough on all sides, and all are guilty, though not equally guilty. But on whomsoever the fault lies, this is undenyable *de facto*, that our union and peace is broken. Besides the grand division of *Papist* and *Pro-*

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*Protestant*, into how many subdivisions is the *Protestant* cause crumbled? Not onely the *Conformist* and *Non-Conformist*: but among the *Non-Conformists*, some *Presbyterians*, some *Independants*, some *Anabaptists*, besides the rabble-rout of *Quakers*, *Seekers*, *Ranters*, &c. and some (to avoid all sidings, as they think) call themselves *Catholics*, by others called *Latitudinarians*, who running from all parties have but constituted another. And among each of these, *Quot capita, tot sententiæ*. Every little difference in judgment, or miscarriage in practice is enough to warrant a separation, and create a new sect. Thus are we broken with breach upon breach; the *line of confusion* is stretched out upon us, and what can be expected next but the *stores of emptiness*!

2. Are we not fallen into a sink of prophanness and sensuality? surely not to be sensible of this argues a person over head and ears in the same guilt. How many, not onely *families*, but whole *parishes* are thereof late brought to confusion and beggery by this means?

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through drunckenness and g'uttony whoredom and idleness and strife, &c. the poor are every where increased, the sober part discouraged, the private stock, which is as the arterial blood of the nation exhausted and embezzelled: all manner of lewdness, Atheism and villany is propagated. This is a lamentation and with me shall be for a lamentation:

But I do not delight to harp on these harsh unpleasant strings: let serious thoughts onely make a stand here and comment a little on these things, and then tell me whither we be not a generation of Back-sliders, that deserve to be called upon to return. Were I not really sensible of this, and did I not foresee greater evils ensuing on it, I were worse than madd to busy my self in so ungrateful an office; but if out of tender love to perishing souls, and ingenuous and due respects to my country, I bestow my pains to warn them of, and secure them from approaching wrath, I hope there be no sober minds, that can well be angry at my innocent attempt. And what  
though

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though I have not the curious knack of  
 \*starcking my words, and tricking my\* *starcking*  
 lines with the gingling gewgaws of  
 flaunting wit; he that will alarm a city of  
 the approach of an enemy, or save his  
 friend from an imminent danger must  
 speak so, as to be understood, and not  
 make an oration to be admired for his  
 eloquence. If I may but speak so as to  
 prevail, I care for no more.

If any complain of abstruse difficult  
 words or sentences, which they may  
 meet with in the ensuing treatise, I an-  
 swer (1) in the Apostles words, 1 Cor.  
 14. 19. *I had rather speak five words*  
*with my understanding, that by my*  
*voice I might teach others also, than*  
*ten thousand words in an unknown*  
*tongue.* I hope I can acquit my heart  
 of any willful affecting of quaint words  
 further than in my apprehension, the  
 propriety of the speech and nature of  
 the thing doth acquire. (2) We live in  
 a wantonage and have to do with cap-  
 tious and curious eares; so that it is not  
 enough that we have plain sense; but

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must cloath it in the most significant words, that we have to use, that we may avoid their nauseating and scorning it. (3) Yet I hope there will be nothing found here; but an indifferently intelligent reader may make a right sense of: and as for those that are unlearned and ignorant they must be content to learn. I never read that book yet that had not something or other in it above the reach of the ignorant. *Neque ista scribendum, ut omnes omnia intelligent, sed ut quædam etiam investigare ac discere cogantur.*

*Fastm.  
de Cop.*

But not to lead you any further here, I shall now dismiss you to the perusal of that which is through divine help prepared for you in the following pages, most humbly imploring the grace of Almighty God to inspire your understandings, consciences and affections with the saving knowledge, power and love of the truth, that this *call* may be effectual for the awakening and reducing of some of those prodigal children, that are forsaking their own mercies,  
which

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which if God please so far to own and honour, I shall account my labours happily bestowed, and none but the devil and his Imps will be offended.



TO



TO THE  
Ingenuous, Christian  
R E A D E R.

**I**T is likely enough that (in such an age as this, that is even glatted with new bookes, and Divinity it self, by this means in danger of breeding a *Nauseam* in mens stomachs) I stand accused for my scribling humor, and that by those of my brethren, that are far better able to do God and his church service in this kind, than my self; but if what I have briefly offerr'd already in my Apology, be not sufficient defense, I shall not stand to dispute the business much further here; onely, I remember the Prophet *Isay* tells us  
there

To the Reader.

there were a people in his days,  
that had *precept upon precept, pre-*<sup>Isa. 28.</sup>  
*cept upon precept, line upon line, line*<sub>10. 13.</sub>  
*upon line, here a little and there a*  
*little.* I do not know that e-  
ver any one of their faithful  
teachers were rebuked for be-  
ing thus instant with them,  
though through their own wic-  
kedness and abuse of this their  
spiritual plenty, (and yet I  
think their plenty did not  
match ours) and Gods righte-  
ous judgement upon them,  
the effect of all was but this.  
*That they might go and fall back-*  
*ward and be broken, and snared, and*  
*taken.* I should be sorry in-  
deed if this should be the fruit  
of our plenty; yet should it  
so be; I hope this will not in-  
dict me for an offender, espe-  
cially

To the Reader.

cially if our reading of the  
*Text* be right, *Precept must be*  
*upon precept*: and if there be no-  
thing found in these sheets (as  
I hope there will not) contra-  
ry to *sound doctrine*. I easily  
grant that there may be an  
excess in this kind; but I think  
the Publisher or Author is  
like to find the first inconve-  
nience of it. What I have  
here now at length prepared,  
was at first intended onely for  
those that were the present  
Auditors; but finding (I trust)  
the good success of it on them,  
and considering the general  
use of it unto all, I was the  
more easily induced to at-  
tempt a work, which I freely  
acknowledge my self very  
poorly accomplished for, and  
cure

To the Reader.

once more to run the adventure of the imputation of folly ; nevertheless , may I be an instrument of reclaiming any of my back-sliding brethren, or strengthening any feeble knees, and therein doing any service to my great Lord and Master ; I shall gladly be accounted a fool for Christs and for my brethrens sakes. Sirs! That the case is sad with poor *England* we cannot but see and feel , *God hath covered us with a cloud in his anger* , both the heavens ; the earth and the seas have and do proclaim his displeasure ; that our *back-slidings* are the cause , cannot be question'd by any sober minds. What I have here suggested , is in all fidelity.

To the Reader.

delity, according to the best of my skill, and as the present state of the case will bear, accommodated to the antidoting of the malignity of this back-sliding spirit, and the recovering, at least of that part of the blessed work of Reformation, which on all sides is confess'd to be every Christians bounden duty, in order to the securing of his own soul. Oh could we but once see that personal Reformation, which we all acknowledge to owe both to God and to our own souls, how happy would the fruit of all these severe corrections be? there might then be hope concerning our later end, and the next generation might see that prediction verified *Ecclesiae Anglicanae reformationem desperasset*



To the Reader.

*rasset ætas præterita, admiratur præ-  
sens, obstupescet futura.* The past age  
despair'd of Englands reforma-  
tion, the present admires it, and  
the next generation shall be  
astonished to see it. Certainly  
we must abandon both Reli-  
gion and Reason if we hope for  
any good peace, without peace  
with God, or for peace with  
God, without breaking our  
peace with sin. Oh that we  
might be able at last to say of  
*England* as *Puteanus* once of the ci-  
ty of *Milane*, *Ignem passa à flammis*  
*reluxit, & hostili adeoque barbaro ara-  
tro proscissa, perpetuæ augurio fœcundi-  
tatis digna fuit.* That having past  
through the fire of so many  
judgements, it might shine (like  
refined gold) by so much the  
brighter, and having been  
plowed

*Putean.  
Hist. Insulæ  
l. 1.*

To the Reader.

plowed and broken by the sharp and cruel harrows of such, and so many calamities, it might be rendred for ever the more fruitful. Which blessed end, if these poor endeavours of mine may be any way serviceable to promote (yea and why may I not with some hopes of success, cast in the seed, when the field is thus plowed and broken) I shall for ever acknowledge my self by so much the more a Debtor unto free Grace, and never repent of my undertaking.

E Museolo nostro,  
Mart. Id. 4. 167 $\frac{1}{2}$ .

A CALL



A CALL  
TO  
BACK-SLIDERS  
Or  
*A supplement unto the voice*  
OF THE ROD.

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JER. 3. 22.

*Return ye back—sliding children  
and I will heal your back—  
slidings.*



His is one of those silver *Trum-*  
*pets*, wherein the Spirit of God  
sounds a loud and pathetic  
*Call* unto a degenerate and  
back-sliding people; wherein  
we have

Something { Implied.  
                  { Impleaded.  
                  { Enjoyned.  
                  { Promised.

First, In the Appellation, *Children*, is  
*implied*

C

I. The

1. *Their Relation*; they are Children not by natural Generation, but either by special adoption, or, at least, by visible Profession, and right of Creation.

2. *Their Condition*: Children are weak, fickle, foolish, unconstant, adventurous, improvident things, yet they are the fathers jewels, and glory, the objects of his care and affections, his greatest comfort if good, and no less his cross if evil.

Pro. 10. 1.

Secondly, they are *impleaded* for a company of back-sliders, a generation of revolvers, degenerated and fallen both in religious and civil respects, from their purity of worship and holiness of life, and by just consequence, from their own merities, peace, prerogatives and priviledges, both ecclesiastical and political; fallen culpably, and therefore fallen penally, *Chap. 2. 13, 14, 15. &c.* therefore

Thirdly, as you fear that great and dreadful name *The Lord thy God*; as you regard his gracious presence with you, and your posterity after you; as ever you hope for any good, be *advised* and perswaded to return.

Fourthly, and for your encouragement be *assured*, though it be not the manner of men in such cases, I will receive, vers. 1. yea, I will heal. *Returne and I will heal your back sliding*; \*both the guilt, the power and the effects of them.

I shall

I shall give you the sum of all in these Propositions, which shall be the *Boundaries* unto the following discourse.

1. *That even the Children of God are some times, and that too often guilty of the sin of Back-sliding.* Prop. 1.

2. *That Back sliding is a wound, or sickness, which none but God can heal.* Prop. 2.

3. *That the onely way to be effectually healed is to turn unto that God who alone is able to do it.* Prop. 3.

We begin with the first : wherein something must be don by way of

Explication.

Demonstration.

Application.

For explication, we understand children in the Proposition as largely as in the text, and then we have but one word here under the veile, and that is *Back-sliding*, which admits of a various consideration or distinction we may consider it either *late*, or *strict*.

1. *Late*, In a large and general sence; and thus it comprehends all sin whatsoever. The state of man in this world is *Motion*, and this Motion is either streight, or crooked; to the right hand, or to the left; forward, or backward; all which speakes but this one thing, either heaven-ward, or hell-ward; so that every step on this stage of mortal life, every thought, word and deed, natural, civil or

*In hac enim vita, non progredi est regredi. Cum nihil adhuc in eodem statu permaneat.* Bern.



religious hath an actual tendency (in its degree) either towards God, or from God; as the smallest morion in the remotest *Circumference* hath an immediate influence on that indiscernable motion at the *Centre*.

*Apostata enim idem sonat quod desertor, &c. Amos. de Conf.*

2. *Stricte*, in a more proper sense; Back-sliding is a relative word, and is in scripture often called whoredom, and adultery, which is a breach of the Marriage-Covenant, which is more than tacitly implied in *vers. 1.* of this *chap.* None can be Apostates from the faith (says one) that never stood in the faith; there must be *ἦσαν* before *ἀπὸ ἡς ἦσαν*, and in this sense it is either Original, or Actual.

1. *Original*, thus we are all convicted for a generation of Apostates *ab ovo*, with relation to that estate from which we fell in and with *Adam*. But to this more fully in another place.

2. *Actual*; And here we may consider in its Kinds, or in its Degrees.

1. In its *Kinds*; And so we will distinguish by its Object; and its Subject.

1. By its *Object*; And thus it is either *Doctrinal*, or *Practical*.

1. *Doctrinal*, In this sense (I confess) the word is generally us'd, though not without a due comprehension (as being the ground) of the other. 1. *Tim. 4. 1.* *Jud. 18.* And how sad and ominous the Apostasie of our days in this respect, the Lord knowes; yea, the sharp & silencing *Dilemma's* of Providence may

may one day, if not too late, convince us too.

2. *Practical*: this (as I have said) is usually, if not always the sequela of the former. *If thine eye be evil thy whole body shall be full of darkness.* Matth 6. 23. and a thousand to one, if ever the blind man hit out the way, when mens blind will are their eyes, and their lusts their light, yea, their Religion too, they must needs wander. *A deceived heart hath turned him aside.* Loose principles never tend to strict practice; a corrupt faith is a tree that brings forth fruit like it self. Isa. 44. 20.

'Tis true, there are some that apostatize in judgment, and yet seem very zealous of good workes, though their partiality be manifest enough surely strange light in the head argues strange fire in the heart. The Apostle had enough of these in his days. Rom. 10. 2. *They have a zeal of God, but not according to knowledge.* And Gal. 6. 12. *As many as desire to make a fair shew in the flesh, they constrain you to be circumcised.* Such as desire to shew their Church-zeal for the *Mosaical* rites and customs, but under pretense of conscience deny and oppose Christ.

Others there are that back-slide from the practice and obedience, while still they profess the Doctrine of faith. *They profess that they know God; but in workes they deny him.* Such were they, 2. Tim. 3. 2, 3, 4, 5. That shelter'd

Pemb.  
Root of Apost.

all manner of wickedness under a form of godliness. Both these (saies one) are Apostates from God equally and alike, an honest Infidel will hold weight with a wicked Christian, and a sober Papist is as good as a drunken Protestant; nay, better. As he hath no religion at all that denyeth that verity of divine doctrine, so he hath no religion to any purpose that holds the truth, but denyeth the power of it. The one is proud of the form, but denies the power; the other pretends high to the power, but denies the principle. A strict and demure life with a corrupt Judgement is but the walking sepulchre; an orthodox judgment with a loose conversation is but the dark shadow of a professor; both Matter and Form are essentially requisite in the gospel-constitution of a Christian; the ones knowledge is but the prattling of a Parrot; the others holiness but the motion of a Puppet; the one an artificial Light; the other an artificial Act.

2. By it's Subject, and thus,

1. In general, so it is

1. Either of a People or Nation, as to their estate in common; A national Back-sliding. Such was the case of *Israel* from the daies of *Solomon* unto the time of their Captivity: decaying and growing worse and worse, both in Doctrine and Manners, till the wrath of God brake forth, and their own land vomited them out, as it had don the heathen before them. Or,

2. Of

2. Of some particular Churches, or Congregations. This was the sin and shame of the Galatian Churches, and of the Corinthian Gal. 3. too; who in the Apostles time, began to kindle those sparkes of schism and faction, which 1. Cor. I. 22. afterward their deeper revolt from the faith blew up into a flame of wrath, by the barbarous hands of *Amurath* and *Mahomet* the second. I might also instance both in the Asian and European Churches; even our own British congregations, who have been so often gadding about to change their way, like these Jer.

2. 36. fain would they keep up their old acquaintance with Egypt; the Bondage indeed was grievous, but the worship and Manners would please them well. And verily I fear, that were it not for the Bondage, the worship would pass well enough still. But thou shalt be ashamed of Egypt as thou wast ashamed of Assyria.

2. In special, of individual persons, which is either

Inward, of the heart, or

Outward, of the life.

1. Inward, a dying and decay at the root: dead while alive; the consumption and rottenness of the heart, which is sometimes not so much as suspected, till the Tree be rooted down and cut insunder. The saw of Judgment discovers what the Eye of charity durst not determine, and this, though it be Original

nal as to its derivation, yet is Actual as to its depravation, and is either

Of the will, or

Of the affections.

I. Of the *will*, and the more there is of this in any sin, the more aggravated is the guilt, and the more desperate is the case: *But they said there is no hope, but we will walk after our own devices, and we will every one do the imagination of his evil hearts.* Jer. 18. 12.

concludi pos-  
se videtur ni-  
hil aliud esse  
voluntatem,  
quam intel-  
lectum exten-  
dentem sese  
ad potendam  
rem cognitam  
& probatam.  
Burg. Col.  
Phys.

Nay, if they will, who can help it. The will is a faculty that browes obedience to none, but the practical dictate of the Judgment, which is the eye that leads it, and of the same essence with it. For what is the will, but the understanding extending it self to the obtaining of its apprehended and approved Object! Hence it is, that *voluntas cogi non potest*, it can't be forc'd; I cannot, by all the Arguments or force in the world, be perswaded to account that evil, and therefore refuse it, which I know or apprehend to be good; or good, and therefore desire it, which I know to be evil; so that by how much the more there is of the *will* in this case, by so much the less there is of *Hope*. He only that can savingly enlighten the mind (which none but the *Father of lights* can do) may consequently allure and perswade the will.

Now partly from that corruption contracted by our first prevarication in *Adam*, and partly



partly from the dayly provocation and elicient power of temptations, the will lies under this threefold Apostasy.

1. *A slavery.* The will (like *Israel*) is *Home-born slave*. Sold under sin for above 5000 years ago. This is the House of its bondage, time was that it was free; free to love, free to honour and free to obey it's Maker, when it bare the image and impress of his will, and held a natural, gracious and universal correspondence with it; but now it hath gotten another Lord and another Law to obey; sin hath usurp'd the reins, and lust sways the scepter over the poor devoted slave.

Oh! whither are the wild Fancies of those entoxicated *Brains* wandring, that can dreame of a liberty under such strong bonds and miserable slavery? what can be the liberty of sins willing servant, but to sin? cruel and intolerable is the yoke of this servitude, even in those in whom it is in part broken and removed, that the Apostle himself cries out: *O wretched man, that I am, who shall deliver me from the body of this death?* Rom. 7. 24. what this body of death is he tells us, ver. 15. *For what I would, that I do not, but what I hate that I do.* When the beauty of holiness and the necessity of regeneration and new obedience are represented to the judgment, and historically & superficially imbraced by it, the will assents to it as true and good, with some general and

*Qualis, quia  
so, potest ser-  
vi additio effo-  
libertas, nisi  
quando peccam-  
re cum dela-  
tar? Aug,  
Ench. c. 50.  
Ergo hac sola  
est libertas  
nostra, quod  
neque coacti  
neque invita  
peccamus,  
sed volentes  
& lubentes.  
Danteus  
Com. in  
Aug.*

faint velleities; *vellet non peccare*, some inclinations are begotten; but then lust presently enters its *Caveats*; Nay, if thou clovest here, thou art undone, bid farewell to me for ever. Christ can't be Lord and I too; If this be thy choice, thou hast made a brave exchange indeed, thou may'st bid pleasures and honours and riches, and ease, and credit, and friends, and all, *Farewell* at once. Who would thus bereave himself for a few uncertain hopes of another world? thence proceed these tossings and fluctuations in the soul ( which are the common convictions of the spirit ) and the troubled mind begins to debate the case, and to compare it's circumstances; but, *Come on, let us deal wisely*, says lust, who, like a grand *Jesuit* in Parliament, repeats the first and *absolute* act of the judgement, and murders those Royal infant inclinations of the will, to establish an interest of his own, by a second and *Comparete* act. Hence it is that *video meliora proboque, deteriora sequor*. It seems to lean one way, but runs the quite contrary. And verily I have often wonder'd to hear with what exactness of reason and heat of affection some men can discuss their duty, and lament the abominations and calamities of the times, and yet to see how directly and universally their practices and compliances do damn their own principles.

2. *An impotency*. The will in it self is *Potentia*

*tentia cæca*, a blind faculty, which, though in a Physical sense, be its nature from its dependance on the understanding, and therefore good; yet in a Moral or Theological sense, we may say, not only *cæca*, but *surda*, both *blind* and *deaf*, and is its infirmity, and therefore will; It can't see, it can't hearken, it can't submit, nor own any Lord over it but lust.

When sometimes God is pleas'd to snatch a flaming dart out of the Artillery of conscience, and to brandish it through the soul by the hand of an ordinance or Providence, it begins to move a little, with a few sickly wishes: would to God I could do better, that I were once rid of this evil heart, or of these strong temptations; it may be wrings out some indigested resolutions, or cold promises, the abortive fruit of its false conceptions; but as soon as the fit is over, it's the same it was, and can move no further than the bare force of the conviction flings it. While conscience berates the soul, and terrifies it with the heart-rending threatnings of a just God, charging it, that if it go on, it shall surely dy, flinging some of the burning coals of divine wrath in its face, it makes the poor wretch go sighing and groaning, Oh! that I were deliver'd from the body of this death, from the bondage of these fears! But sin and Satan hold their own; the will must not be denyed, or rather the lust that tyrannizeth over  
it

*Jer. 2. 25.*

it. *No, there is no hope, for I have loved strangers and after them will I go.* If wishing and wouling will do it, if reading, and hearing, and fasting, and praying will do it, if any thing but a thorow parting with sin and self will serve the turn, and still the cries of an angry conscience, and pacify the wrath of an offended God, I can be content; but this *right hand*, this *right eye* I can't spare: the strong man will not yield, unto whom I am bound, and must, yea, will obey.

3. *Its obstinacy.* This is the misery; were the slave but weary of his bondage, there were hope; were he not as presumptuous as blind; as peevish and froward as weak, it were something; were it but a fit of some accidental distemper, and not an hereditary and rooted Antipathy, the case were nothing so sad; but (as one saies) it is a twisted enmity, which cannot be broken. *For the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.* Gal. 6. 17. The will is a slave that is grown fond of his own bonds, that hath board his ear for a perpetual vassallage, and is proud of that tyranny that is exercis'd on him; none such enemies as those that would release him; no way so unpleasing as that which leads to his happiness, and therefore no day so dreadful as that which should and might have been

been his blessed and joyful jubilee.

2. Of the Affections, which lies in their Disorder.

Distemper.

1. *Their disorder.* The whole frame is out of course, every wheel and motion is inverted, and preposterous; they mistake their objects; what they should love, they hate, and what they should hate, they love; what they should covet, they contemn, and what they should contemn, they covet; at what they should grieve, they rejoice, and at what they should rejoice, they grieve. *Wo unto them that call evil good, and good evil; that put darkness for light, and light for darkness, that put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter.* Isa. 5. 20. The Affections are the feet of the soul, but they are crooked feet, *Loripedes*; they stand awry, and therefore step awry; hence it is that God complains of *crooked pathes*, and *crooked ways*, and a *crooked generation*, such as, of themselves, can't make one strait stop to their feet, no not so much as a *Thought*, from any naturally inherent principle of Legal, or Evangelical rectitude.

Isa. 59. 2.  
Pro. 2. 15.  
Deut. 32. 5.

2. *Their distemper.* As they are wild and unstable, disorderly, roving, and ill-disciplin'd; so they are sickly, crazy and feverish too, nauseating and loathing whatsoever tends to their healing, but unsatiably and impatiently

ΖΕΟΥΤΕΣ

Rom. 12. 11.

ἀπαραι-

μύτους

1. Cor. 7. 32.

AB. 18. 17.

tiently greedy of any thing that may strengthen their disease. Where they should be *servant in spirit*, boyling hot, there they freeze; but where they should be *without carefulness*, mortified, unmoveable, and resolv'd, there they are in a flame, and burn like coales of *Juniper*. In matters of the highest interest and eternal consequence they can't concern themselves; let God frown, they are blind; let him threaten, they are deaf; let him command, they can't move; but let the world lowr, they presently begin to howl; let lust be but touch't, they spring into a passion, and the cold *Salamanders* are metamorphos'd into *balls of wild-fire*: the least touch transports them. Oh! they can't bear it, 'tis the very apple of the eye. Hence are those immoderate heates and qualms on the spirits, those extasies of carnal joy, those trembling fits of fear, those furious passions of anger, and that burning thirst of revenge, &c. the sinful effects of their sad distemper. And thus the Back-sliding is either

1. *Hereditary* and natural; and is properly so called, with reference to that estate wherein we were at first created, whereof all are a like guilty, or

2. *Accidental* and acquired; when that gospel-light, which once began to shine in the understanding is either sottishly extinguish'd, prophanely abus'd, or erroneously perverted;



red; the will and affections carnaliz'd and degenerated from what once they were, or seem'd to be; love grown cold, resolutions broken and lost, conscience idle, or cauteriz'd; when that which was once held beyond doubt with the soul, for indispensable duty, or inexcusable sin, is now question'd, or the contrary entertain'd in judgment or practice; when duty begins to lose its authority, and the reasonings of flesh and blood rather credited and obeyed, than the voice of scripture and conscience: this is adying at the root, an inward, spiritual decay.

2. *Outward*, and these two are not wont to be far asunder. But besides those rotten principles, whose natural and proper tendency is toward such effects; this outward open Apostasy is oftentimes occasion'd of such grounds as these

1. *Of ignorance*. Being alienated from the life of God through the ignorance that is in them *Eph. 4. 18*. Such were those *silly women* the Apostle mentions. 2. *Tim. 3. 6*. Therefore Satan, when he assaulted Paradise, first began with the woman, on whose weakness, the temptation might receive advantage. He that is ignorant is potentially any thing, *capax omnium formarum*. By this means, the dearest of Gods children have sometimes been drawn into those snares, that all the world should never have perswaded them to have touch't, had the *Net* been spread in their sight.

fight. Therefore this was *Paul's* wisdom 2. Cor. 2. 11. *Left Satan should get an advantage of us; for we are not ignorant of his devices.* But more of this in another place.

2. *Of Fear*, which is either *Habitual*, arising from a tender jealousy of some espoused interest, wherein a soul fondly places its happiness, and promises it self content; or else a sudden *Surprizal* of fear, proceeding from an unexpected approach, of danger, and the invincible infirmity of nature, especially in timorous constitutions. Of this also in its place.

3. *Of Carnal Hope*. A man's hope hath the command of his heart. What fear will do on the one, hope will do on the other. The young man you read of, *Matth. 19*. That hop'd to get eternal life, and keep what he had too is an instance here, the breaking of these hopes recoil on him, and so farewell to a forward Disciple.

4. *Of a childish Flexibility*, and easiness to be wrought on by others; when persons are of so servile, unresolv'd and feminine a spirit, that, like a piece of wax, they may be form'd into any shape; this is to brutify our reason, to prophane our Religion, and to sell our selves (like *Iffachar*) for asses and slaves to the imperious wills and lusts of men. This proceeds sometimes from the weaknesses of nature, but too often from a secret and for-  
did

did parasitical principle in favour of some adored lust, or aspiring desigme; *The woman which thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree; and I did eat; and this indeed is the common influence, especially of superiours on their inferiours. Regis ad exemplum &c.*

5. Of *Incogitancy*, or inconsideratenesse; when the foot slips ere we are aware: not from any actual purpose or deliberate preintention; but from a sinful inconstancy, temerity, security or unwatchfulness. Hence it is the soul is so off and on, now resolv'd to live and dy with Christ, by and by affraid to own him; now a vow, and then a relapse; now a war with sin, and then a truce; now on the knees before God, by and by lifting up the heel against him; now *thine are we, O David, and on thy side*, anon, *what portion have we in the son of Jesse?* and what is spun in the day, untwisted again before the next morning.

1. Chro. 12.  
13.  
1 King. 12.  
16.  
Penelope's  
lam taxere.

6. Of *prejudice*; when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended. *Math. 13. 21.* This is the common prejudice of the world, *I knew thee that thou art an hard man.* But sometimes it ariseth from some private distasts or affronts, as 'tis reported of *Porphyrius*, who being faithfully reprov'd by certain Christians, turn'd apostate for very spight; or from hopes of some pre-

Suid.

ferment, favour or advantage; so *Judas*, to ingratiate himself with the Jews, betrays his Lord and Master. I shall not insert here a particular enumeration of all those prejudices, the world hath conceived against Christ; but shall tell you in a word; whatsoever offends the flesh in any of its darling-lusts, or admired injoyments, proves a stone of stumbling and a rock of offence, at which the best do sometimes stagger and start aside; but on which the most do split their profession, at least the power and strictness of it.

2. Back-sliding may also be consider'd in its degrees; and that

Of intension, or

Of extension.

1. Of *intension*; and so it is either

1. Of *weakness*, or unwatch-fulness, for want of a holy jealousy and suspicion, either of our own sufficiency or corrupt inclinations, or of those things that carry the deceit, power and mischief of a temptation in them; when we are so secure, confident and adventurous, or do'nt stir up the grace that is in us, the strength whereof lies in its exercise, and thus a *cedar* may be shaken, a *David*, a *Peter* may thus be overtaken.

2. Of *Malice*, and set-purpose, which is the very height of Apostasy; that drawing back which is unto perdition. *For if we sin wilfully, after that we have received the knowledge of the*

*the truth, there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins. Heb. 10. 26.* When men sin *remittente & tremente conscientia*, against the clear light and terrible threatnings and rebukes of Conscience, it concludes a very desperate case.

2. *Of extension*; and so it is either 1. a single act, or 2. a progressive course of Back-sliding.

1. A single act; such was *Noah's* drunkenness; the *Prophet's* disobedience, who was slain by the lyon; *David's* numbring of the people: *Judah's* incest with *Tamar*; *Peter's* denying of his master; and thus the best of saints are lyable to a fall; *For a just man falleth seven times and riseth up again. Pro. 24. 16.* But *the wicked fall into mischief.* They fall and there they ly, fall with a mischief. Though sometimes they seem to rise, and repent, and return, yet they are but some of those that look one way and row another; or like a Dog that turnes his head against the stream, and paddles with his feet, but the current is too strong for him, and away he goes to destruction; they may fast and pray and read and hear and complain and wish, and yet down-stream they go insensibly slide away, revolt more and more. *Many will seek to enter, Luk. 13. 24. and shall not be able.*

*Gen. 9. 21.  
1. Kings 13. 21.  
1. Chro. 21. 1.  
Gen. 38. 26.  
Mar. 14. 68.*

2 A progressive course, a perpetual back-sliding; *evil men and seducers shall wax worse and worse, deceiving and being deceived.*



.2. *Tim. 3. 13.* when the mind growes more frothy or sottish: the will more slavish or selfish: the conscience more sullen or unsensible: the affections more brutish or incorrigible: the heart more unbelieving or impenitent: the whole conversation, or any part of it more sensual, corrupt or irregular. When men grow more covetous, more proud, more unthankful, more prophane, more censorious, more deceitful in their words and dealings, more customary and dead in duties, more contented with any Religion, less affected with the mercies, threatnings or judgments of God, the decay of the power of godliness, and the publique calamities of the church; when men grow weary of a strict life, and affraid to stand to what they have profest; when they have eaten up that zeal they once pretended was like to eat them up; this is a sad and ominous kind of *Back-sliding*.

2. All this is either gradual, or total.

1. *Gradual*; A lapse or halting in some particular parts of faith or practice; this, if meerly circumstantial, and of the lesser consequence, should be covered with the mantle of love, and some graines of allowance be had for the sick and feeble of the flock, with a brotherly compassion of their infirmities; But if in substantial and fundamental respects, as when the judgment begins to imbrace some damnable heresy, or the like, to defile its profession by



by some scandalous courses; these indeed, are sometimes but a *scab*, no *spreading leprosy*, but I must tell you, they are the ordinary prologue to a sad catastrophe, which is

2. *A total Apostasy*; they are all *grievous revolvers*, walking with *slanders*: they are *brass and iron*, they are all *corrupters*. -- *Reprobate silver shall men call them, because the Lord hath rejected them.* Jer. 6. 28. 30. They are all gone *aside*, they are altogether become *filthy*. Psal. 14. 3.

intimating a double universality, of the persons, and of the thing. They are gone *away backward*. Isa. 1. 4. They are not wandering on the right hand, or on the left (though that were bad enough) but are gone directly backward. They have broken the very essentials of their covenant; what once they lov'd, now they hate; whom once they kiss'd, now they stab: and what once they upheld, now they persecute. They *crucify to them selves* (in some sense, and in some degree) *the son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.* Heb. 6. 6.

Lastly, this Apostasy is either temporary, or final.

1. *Temporary*: 'Tis sad when the poor soul slips (as it were) both feet at once: yet it was so with *David*, wherefore he prays, *Renew a right spirit within me.* Oh! he was become quite another man than he was before; therefore *Renew a right spirit in me.* He that was of a chaste and undefiled mind, is now become incontinent

Psal. 51. 10.

in his lust; he that was of a merciful, tender spirit, is now become bloody and cruel; he that was a man of perfect heart, hath now play'd the Hypocrite both with God and man, therefore *create* in me a clean heart: as if he had said, this old heart is too bad to be mended, there's never a piece of it will serve again, it can be no less than a *creation* to reinduce the new-creature on such spiritual ruines as these.

But I would not be mistaken here, as if I would suggest a total falling from grace. As low and as sad as the case was with David at present, yet being born of God, *his seed remained in him*, though he had lost the lustre and exercise of his graces, he had not lost the life and essence of them; but was like the *Tyl-tres* or the *oke* in winter, whose substance is in them when they cast their leaves, even the *holy seed* which can never dy. The like also was *Peter's* case. *Matth. 26. 74, 75. Aaron's* and the *Israelites. Exod. 32. 1. &c.*

2. *Final*; 'Tis possible for the saint to suffer a total *Eclipse*, not onely of his comforts, but his graces too, that is, in the evidence and exercise of them. The child may ly dead as to sense and motion, that you shall not perceive the least symptome of life in the ordinary operations of nature; and it is but a *ληροθυμία* a *swourning fit*, or some epileptick rapture. Who would ever have taken *Peter* for a disciple, that had heard him in that *Christ* denying, swear-

swearing, cursing extasy? what could the very vilest of *Pilat's* house have done more.

But I must add such cases, as they are rare, so they are not lasting. Fits are not wont to hold long. Where the life is thus imprison'd, it will quickly burst its bonds, or give up the ghost. If the child be long without any symptome of life, the father reckons it among the *dead*, and will bury it out of his sight: such was the fatal and final apostasy of *Joash*. 2. *Chro.* 24. 2. 17. and of his son *A-maziab* too, *Chap.* 25. 2. 14. of *Judas*; of *Lucian*; of *Julian*; of *B<sup>p</sup>. Bonner*, who in *Henry* the eights days was a great patron of the Gospel, for which the Lord *Cromwel* procured him a bishoprick, but soon after, turn'd a bloody Apostate. I shall instance but in one more; *Gardner B<sup>p</sup>. of Wint.* could cry out on his death-bed, that he had denied his master with *Peter*, but not repented with *Peter*, and so ended his cursed days under the just vengeance of God. These are some of them that draw back unto perdition. 1. *Per. 1. 23.*  
*Alb. & Mon.*

Thus far for Distinction: proceed we now to Demonstration: where we shall consider the *quod sit*, the *unde sit*, and the *quomodo sit*.

1. The *quod sit*, that the best may be (that is *de facto*, not *de jure*, and too often are guilty of back-sliding. *Quod sit.*

1. *The best of creatures*, angels, those glorious and seraphical spirits, the heavenly host

τῶν ἀγγέλων  
ἡλῶν.

of the Almighty God : even among these have been found some apostates ; there are *angels that kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, Jud. 6.* They kept not their *beginning* ; they hold not what once they had ; that dignity or principality, that divine stamp of holiness, majesty and beauty, wherein they were created ; but left their own habitation, the mansions of glory and felicity prepared for them, which might have been their own (had they not left them) to all eternity, *ἀπολλύσιντας*, they were not flatter'd nor forc'd, nor fir'd out, but they left it : whether negligently, or willfully : they left their obedience, and consequently their glory and happiness. *They fell like lightning from heaven, Luke 10. 18.* which seems at least to allude to their first fall, though the direct aim of the words in this place look another way, Satan fell like lightning, and lightning, as one says, is gone ere we can say it is come : they made hast to fall : fell the second instant of their creation, say some of the school-men ; but this, I think, I may more boldly say ; the very instant of their rebellion was the instant of their ejection : heaven grew too hot to hold them, brandishing them forth like lightning out of the bosom of an angry cloud, or like *sbot* from the mouth of a canon : the very instant that sprung the fire of their apostasy unloaded the pure, celestial thrones of these proud, degenerated

Statim post  
primum in-  
stans.

nerated spirits. *Behold he put no trust in his servants, and his angels be changed with folly, Job. 4. 18.* He charges them all potentially and comparatively ; but those that fell actually. The best of creatures are not to be trusted, if left to themselves, mutable, unconstant, and prone to back-slide ; even angels, that were made for more glorious and immediate service ; *his servants* *κατ' ἐξοχὴν*, his courtiers that daily wait about the throne, and if these be not to be trusted, in much less is man ; which is the use he makes of it, *ver. 19. How much less them that dwell in houses of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, which are crushed before the moth ?*

2. *The purest of churches.* This is testified of Israel, Gods peculiar people ; of *Shiloh*, the beauty of the whole earth, the onely visible church of God in the world. *Yet they tempted and provoked the most high God, and kept not his testimonies : but turned back and don't deceitfully like their fathers : they were turned aside like a deceitful bow, Psal. 78. 56, 57.* When the Lord heard this, he was wroth, and greatly abhorred Israel : so that he forsook the Tabernacle at *Shiloh*, the tent which he had placed among men, *ver. 59, 60.* Nay the Apostasy of *Shiloh*, and the vengeance of God upon it, even the place where he set his name at the first, became a reproach and a proverb unto future generations, *Jer. 7. 12.* and *chap. 26. 6.* Yea *Jerusalem* herself, though warn'd by *Shiloh*, yet is



at last become another such, both for her Apostasy and her plagues. *For thus Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem, which now is, and is in bondage with her children, Gal. 4. 25.* Whence *Mr. Perkins* observes in his comment on the place: „ That „ there is no church in the world, nor people, „ which is not subject to Apostasy; therefore „ it is a falshood (says he) which the Papists „ teach. That the infallible assistance of the „ spirit is tyed to the chair and consistory of „ the Pope, so as he, and consequently the „ church of *Rome* cannot err. And because our present generation have so unhappily verified his application, I shall transcribe him in a word or two more. „ Here again we see „ what may be the future condition of *England*; for it may be said of it hereafter, *England* that now is, is not that which it hath been &c. What was the matter the Apostle so pathetically exclaimes on the churches of *Galatia*, as if they had been bewitch't? *Gal. 3. 1.* The ground of it we find, *chap. 1. 6.* *I marveile that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel;* his strong jealousy and vehement suspicion of their back-sliding: *I am afraid of you, lest I have bestowed on you labour in vain, chap. 4. 11.* Where is now the glory and constancy of the *Asian* Churches: even in the Apostles time? the choice of all the seven, his



his *Philadelphia* had need of a *regard à l'exercice*. Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown. The church of *Rome* was Rev. 3. 9 once the beauty of the gentiles. *I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the whole world.* Rom. 1. 8 But now we may say of *Rome*, as the Prophet Isa. 1. 21, 22 once of *Jerusalem*. *How is the faithful city become an harlot? it was full of judgement, righteousness lodged in it; but now murderers. Thy silver is become dross, thy wine mixt with water.* Lord! that this should ever be true of *England* too.

3. *The holiest of saints.* *Adam*, the very epitome and excellency of God's creation, on whose nature his image was enstamped, an image of *righteousness* and *true holiness*. Eph. 4. 24 Who had understanding and power sufficient both to know and obey, and on whose obedience the welfare of his whole posterity depended; yet *Adam* himself can't stand before the enticing breath of a silly woman; and if *Adam* in that estate of innocency, and original perfection, were but a reed shaken with the wind, as *Christ* once said of *John*, we need not wonder to see his poor crippled posterity to halt, and trip, and fall, a righteous *Noah* ensnared by the beguiling spirits of his wine; a meek *Moses* surprized by a provoked passion; a patient *Job* cursing his day in the bitterness of his sorrows; a holy *David* overmatch't by

so bewitching an object. I need not open those infirmities which God hath covered, to demonstrate that which our own eyes are daily witnesses to.

*unde fr.*

Proceed we now to shew you whence it is that the best of Gods children are so apt to back-slide from him.

1. *It is from the weakness of the regenerate part.* The best of saints are flesh as well as spirit; our lost perfections are renewed but in part; for we know in part, and prophesie in part. 1. Cor. 13. 9. Time was, we might have known God perfectly, obeyed him fully, and lov'd, and fear'd, and prais'd, and ador'd him as the angels do in Heaven; but alas! our ambition was such, that we abode not in that *honour*; we soon lost the beauty of that divine image, and the original and concreated power of these heavenly principles. And now, though it hath pleased the father so far to commiserate the poor undone world, as to send his dear and blessed son, to seek and to save, to gather up the elect of God, to wash them in the sacred fountain of his blood, and to inspire them with the spirit of his grace; yet for holy, wise and gracious ends, he is pleas'd to suffer these *Canaanites* to sojourn with them, which dayly vex and grieve them, though he love them so tenderly, even according to that inestimable price of their redemption; yet he sees it for his own honour,

honour, and for their advantage, to keep them humble, thankful and watchful through the buffetings of Satan.

'Tis true, it is the will of God that we should be assaulted, yet 'tis our own fault, if we are overcome. *Jam. 1.4.* Satan may offer a temptation; but 'tis our own lust that entices us. Thou complaineſt, the ſtrong man is too hard for thee; thou can'ſt not maſter thy paſſions, nor be wary enough of a deceitful heart; oh! if thou could'ſt but get above temptations, and once come to run on plain ground, in what a world wert thou then? if thou could'ſt but rid thy hands of theſe ſons of *Anak*, thoſe gyants that ſtagger thee at every blow, and lead thee captive at their pleaſure, under whoſe bonds and fetters thou ſigheſt and groaneſt before God; oh! if thou could'ſt but wing it up, above this troubleſome and tempeſtuous air, what a happy ſoul wert thou? why, I muſt answer thee as *David* once answered himſelf, *this is thy infirmity*; the weakneſs of the new creature in thee.

*Object.* Ay, but the new man is alway the ſtronger man. *Luk. 11. 22.* true grace is of a conquering, victorious nature and power; *He that is born of God ſinneth not. 1. Joh. 5. 18.* If Chriſt be formed in me in truth, why am I thus?

*Anſ.* This is one argument, that *twists* are in thy womb; but, more directly.

1. We

*Si Deus ceſ-  
ſat tentare;  
Magiſter ceſ-  
ſat docere. -  
Neſcit ſe ho-  
mo, niſi in  
tentatione  
diſcat ſe.  
Aug. de  
temp.*

1. We must distinguish between the grace it self, and the person qualified with it. Grace it self is utterly unconquerable, though the person may be overcome. As for example; a man indowed with a spirit of true valour, that fears the face of no enemy, and scorns to turn his back for a man; yet take such a one at an advantage, in an unseen snare. or asleep, or languishing on a sick-bed, and so indeed you may bind him, as the Philistims dealt with a shaven *Sampson*; bind his body you may, though his spirit be invincible, you may make a *captive*, but not a *coward* of him, so it is with a child of God, his grace is unconquerable, though he often fail in the exercise of it.

2. This weakness of the person in the exercise of grace is either *habitual*, or *actual* and occasional.

1. *Habitual*. There are different degrees of grace, several formes in the School of Christ, some children and babes; others grown men. *Heb. 5. 13, 14.* and you know, 'tis no wonder to see a child fall, and knock his browes. *When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child. 1. Cor. 13. 11.*

2. *Actual*, or occasional; so the strongest and wisest, the most humble, heavenly, mortified, resolved, self-denying, vigilant and experienced Christians, those that are

men

men in Christ, the cedars of Gods Lebanon, have their staggerings and concussions, and like children, sometimes tossed to and fro, even he, of whom Christ himself bore record, that among them that are born of women, there hath not arisen a greater Prophet, seems to be called by the same mouth, *a reed shaken with the wind.* The surest foot may sometimes trip, and the clearest eyes be mistaken.

*Math. 11. 7.  
I. e.  
Quandoque  
bonus dormi-  
t et Homerus.  
Hot.*

*Obj.* But you say; *He that is born of God sinneth not*; 1. *Joh. 5. 18.* but I sin, therefore am not born of God.

*Ans.* The perfectists draw their assumption from their own bold supposition; but I am born of God; therefore sin not. And thus ordinarily the one deludes his comfort, the other his conscience. But to answer it briefly.

1. With the words of Scripture; 1. *Joh. 1. 8.* the same Apostle, and the same epistle. *If we say, we have no sin, we deceive our selves, and the truth is not in us.* Not if thou, or ye say so, who are undenyably the children of darkness, but if we saints, Apostles, or who ever we be, say, not that we *had* no sin, before we were thus called and sanctified, but, that we *have* no sin, and that, both in the root, and in the fruit of it, we deceive our selves. *For in many things we offend all. Jam. 3. 2.* *There is no man that sinneth not.* 1. *Kings 8. 46.* No man, Jew nor Gentile, believer  
nor



nor unbeliever, young nor old, great nor small, whither born after the flesh or after the spirit. *Who can say, I have made my heart clean. I am pure from my sin?* Pro. 20. 9. nay, *There is not a just man upon earth, that doth good and sinneth not*, Eccles. 7. 20. *And who can understand his errors?* says David, Psal. 19. 12. so that the argument can never hold in truth without some restriction.

2. With the sense of scripture. *Whosoever is born of God sinneth not*; that is, that sin unto death, or unpardonable sin, mention'd as one branch of his distinction, ver. 16. There is a sin not unto death, and of this a brother may be guilty, and on repentance, through the mercy of God in Christ, pardoned, *he shall ask, and he shall give him life, for them that sin not unto death*; But then there is a sin unto death, 'tis true, as all unrighteousness is sin, so death is the desert and wages of sin in general; but this is that peculiar kind, or degree of sin, for which there remaineth no sacrifice, nor promise. Now we know that whosoever is born of God sinneth not after this manner. And in this sense onely, we allow that distinction of sinnes *venial* and *mortal*, though we dare not avouch it, nay, dare not but abhor it in the Romish sense, which grounds the *venialty* on the nature and merit of the thing, and not on free grace; as if there were some sins so venial, as that they

*Recte dicunt  
Theologi, pec-  
cata venialia,  
cujuscunque  
eandem gene-  
ris sint, non  
esse præter  
legem,  
Bellar. de  
amiss. grat.  
l. 1. cap. 11.  
1. Joh. 3. 4.*



are not in their own nature and merit mortal. *Præter legem*, but not *contra legem*, as they falsely distinguish; but surely *sin*, be it what it will, is *the transgression of the law*, and can the law be properly transgress'd, or broken, but by that which is formally contrary to it?

But you may insist; there is no such thing mention'd, *chap. 3. 9. Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin because he is born of God.* This will be answer'd by the precedent verse, he that is born of God doth not *diabolize*, he doth not commit sin after the similitude of Satan, who sinneth, and can do nothing else. *οὐκ ἀναγίγναι* imploy's himself wholly in it, hath nothing else in him, but principles that incline him this way, but he that is born of God understand this not of a natural, but a *moral cannot*. Cannot so commit sin; though he sin daily, both in *commission* and *omission*, yet the main stream of his soul runnes another way; this is not the constitution and frame of his life; but the fits of his lamented distemper. Or else take the general solution thus; he that is born of God sinneth not, or doth not commit sin; that is, *eatenus*, so far forth as he is born of God, as to his regenerate part; hence it is that *Paul* distinguishes, *it is no more I, but* Rom. 7. 10. *sin that dwelleth in me.* This is the first reason why the best of men are so apt to back-slide; they are at best but men, *and humanum est errare. Hos. 6. 7.*

2. The second reason is but the other part of the *Antithesis*; the strength, of that corruption that is to be found in the very best; as in the great world, the better is the lesser part, so in the little world, the spiritual, noble and renewed part is also, in some respects, the lesser part; one *Noah* in a whole world; one *Lot* in four or five cities; one *Job* in the whole land of *Uz*; one good *Abyah* in all the house of *Feroboam*, and in him no great matter neither, a few *Names* in *Sardis*; so in individuals, a grain of faith in a mountain of unbelief; a few sparkes of holy zeal wrap't up in a cloud of fears; a ray or two of divine light, a candle, a lamp, a poor dwindling taper in a whole hemisphear of darkness; a small anchor of hope in the midst of the swelling surges and violent stormes of distrust; a handful of corn in a heap of dust; a little leaven of true grace in a whole lump of flesh and blood; no wonder then, we are unstable as a brook, and like a broken bow in Gods hand, no wonder we slip, and stagger and fall, that are so broken and crippl'd in every limb. 'Tis true, as I have said, the regenerate part is, in it self, the stronger part, 'tis the rising side, like the house of *David*, waxing greater and greater, under all present weakneses, hard slips, hazards and deprivals; and when the Kingdom once comes to hand, and judgement is brought forth to victory, then shall

all

all these proud and stubborn enemies stoop, and be layd as far under our feet as hell is beneath heaven. *The path of the just is as the shining light that shineth more and more unto the perfect day.* The day is sprung from on high upon him, though it be but twilight yet; a day of small things, yet there is that in the very nature of it, that divine *vis plastica*, that hath an effectual tendency to perfection though it be, as yet but the *day-star*, the *sun of righteousness* is approaching too, which shall in due season appear in the more powerful and immediate influences of his glorious presence.

Pro. 4. 18

3. Add to these, *the violence of temptations both from within and without, yea and from beneath too*, and you need not wonder to see the poor believer sometimes in the hands of his enemies. That cursed Idol of self that hath so strongly and epidemically insinuated into our very nature, the great and adored *Diana* of the flesh, the predominant principle of the world, which the unsanctified will had as lien dy, yea, be damn'd as deny; those unbelieving fears, that cry out with *Pe-* Matth. 16.  
*ter; save thy self, this shall not be unto thee;* those carnal reasonings, principles, interests and affections, which, like a mighty torrent, drive all before them, those wild passions, that are ever and anon casting the spirits into a burning fever. Those golden apples thrown

in by the world, in the necessities, threatings, reproaches, and persecutions of it, on the one hand; in the honours, ease, abundance, flatteries and hopes of it, on the other hand; besides those invincible infirmities and dispositions, that naturally attend this house of clay; again from beneath, the gates of hell conspiring mischief and snares; callings, constitutions, duties, endowments and providences all improv'd to fasten the snare on the poor captive; no wonder that the best of saints are sometimes found in the pathes of the back-slider. When lust struggles within, and the flesh quarrels, and the world charmes, and the devil juggles with all his hellish and unsuspected craft, and God, it may be, hides his face too, ah! when the distressed soul is thus toss'd, and rack'd, and benighted in those dismal clouds, that he scarce knows east from west in the compass of his duty, is it strange that he should wander? Though all this indeed will not excuse neither *à toto* nor *à tanto*, yet it shewes us the *unde fit*, whence it is the people of God do so often fall.

But as we pass here, you may enquire, how far a child of God may back-slide; and how far the saint and the sinner may symbolize in the acts and aggravations of their back-slidings. To this I answer.

- I. As scandalous; and as dangerous as the falls of the saint may be, yet he cannot fall finally.

ly. Here I might plead with those, who, ascribing that to man's *free-will* which is peculiarly due to God's *free-grace*, do wickedly oppose this Evangelical truth. A fool degree doth never conclude a final estate of apostasy, in a true believer. This might appear

I. From the *nature of justifying faith*. The Apostle calls *ἡ πίστις res per se subsistens*. Heb. 11. 1. no shadow, nor dream, no fond conceit; but a reality, a substance, & *substantia non annihilatur*. The substance of things hoped for, and what things are they? but which Peter calls the *end of our faith*, even the *salvation of our souls* it is (as it were) a con-substantiating of the faculty with its object, so that he that hath faith hath the substance, the assurance, the tantamount of salvation it self. By this means the believer is made partaker of the divine nature, and becomes like mount *Sion*, which cannot be moved, yea, it is the *evidence of things not seen*, no blark, no forgery, but *ἡ πίστις* a clear, authentick and infallible evidence. *A hope that maketh not ashamed*. Rom. 5. 5. Senec. Ep. 10. Though in respect of the subject it be *boni incertum* men, mixed with some staggerings and uncertainties; yet in it self, it is an *anchor sure and stedfast*. Heb. 6. 19. *A well of water springing up unto everlasting life*. Joh. 4. 14. *Incorruptible, immortal and eternal seed*. 1. Pet. 1. 23. Though the profession of faith, the dead



Eph. 5. 30.

picture, and counterfeit of it may be shipwreckt, the grace of faith shall be sure of a happy arrivall. This is the souls grapple, its knitting and uniting with Christ in a mystical and indissoluble oneness, Christ and the believer are one, one flesh and one spirit, and therefore must sink or swim together, yea, God and the believer are one, *Joh. 17. 21. 23.* So that 'tis as impossible for the other to perish, while the union holds, therefore, *because I live, ye shall live also. Joh. 14. 19. and as the living father hath sent me, and I live by the father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. chap. 6. 57.*

2. 2. The purpose of God is unalterably established for his peoples perseverance. 'Tis the eternal and unchangeable decree of heaven to predestinate whom he foreknew. i. e. with the knowledge of electing grace, and to call whom he hath predestinated, to justify whom he hath or shall effectually call, and to glorify all whom he hath once justified. *Rom. 8. 28, 29, 30.* But this good pleasure of God must stand, or he must cease to be God; yea, the very pillars of his high prerogative are layd on the irresistibleness of his divine purpose. Deny this and you raze the foundations of the gospel, on which all our hopes, consolations and security is built, *Luk. 12. 32. Fear not little flock, and why? because it is your fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.* But were this

2. Tim. 2. 19.



this good pleasure of his changeable, there were cause enough of fear and little ground to rejoice in the hope of a Kingdom.

3. The power of God is faithfully ingag'd for it too. *My Father which gave them me is greater than all, and none is able to pluck them out of my fathers hand.* Joh. 10. 29. 'Twas not the personal and private perswasion of the Apostle, but the common confidence of the saints. *I know whom I have believed, and I am perswaded that he is able to keep that which I have committed unto him against that day.* 2.

*Tim. 1. 12.* Doth he not clearly infer an assured performance, from this confident assertion of his power. He is able to keep that which I have committed to him, what's that? surely 'tis no common pebble, or piece of dirty lumber that he lays up in such a cabinet, and against such a day, but 'tis his jewel, his all, his very life, Col. 3. 3. his life of grace, and his life of glory, this he can keep, and therefore will keep. *My grace is sufficient for thee.* This *can* implies a will, or else what is his confidence worth? Of whom doth Peter affirm that they are kept by the power of God, through faith unto salvation? but of all those who, according to the abundant mercy of God, are begotten again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead. 1. Pet. 1. 3, 5. 'Tis true, the saint falls, as well as others, and sometimes as foully too;

*Non passurus est, ut excidant fide ejus cognitione. Tossan. in loc.*

*Non passurus est, ut excidant fide ejus cognitione. Tossan. in loc.*

*i. e. vitam eternam seu felicitatem meam, quam apud eum deposui per fidem ac spem. Piscat. Schol. in loc. 1. Cor. 12. 9.*

But though he fall, he shall not be utterly cast down; for the Lord upholdeth him with his hand. *Psal. 37. 24.* The eternal God is thy refuge, and underneath are the everlasting arms. *Deut. 33. 27.* Therefore in this attribute the Apostle Jude summes up all the hopes and security of his saints, in that dangerous defection of professors, when he commits them to him that is able to keep them from falling. *Jud. 24.*

4. 4. The promise of God is another strong and golden nail in this holy place: For God is not a man, that he should repent, hath he said, and shall he not do it? or hath he spoken, and shall he not make it good? *Numb. 23. 19.* I will make an everlasting covenant with them, that I will not turn away from them, to do them good; but I will put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. *Jer. 32. 40.* Observe, the fear, which he promises to put in their hearts, (i. e. not onely of Israel but of all his elects) is the sure and infallible ground and pledge of their perseverance: *q. d.* I will so put my fear in their hearts, that they shall not depart from me. Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering, for he is faithful that promised. *Heb. 10. 23.* Promised? what to do? See 2. *Thess. 3. 3.* The Lord is faithful who shall stablish you, and keep you from evil. Not onely able or careful, but faithful, which implies a promise to do it.

5. 5. The Purchase of Christ ascertaines the perse-

perseverance of the saint Christ hath purchas'd his flock, and every hoof of it; and surely the devil shall never cheat nor violence him of the dear price of his blood. *Take heed unto your selves and to all the flock -- which he hath purchased with his own blood.* Act. 20. 28. *I lay down my life for the sheep. And I give unto them eternal life, and they shall never perish, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand.* Joh. 10. 15, 28. They shall not perish by any inherent corruption, or power of their own wills, neither shall any pluck them out of my hand by external force or flattery.

*An audebis  
dicere, etiam  
roganti  
Christo no  
desigaret si-  
des Petri, de-  
fecturam suis-  
se, si eam  
Petrus desig-  
nare voluisset? Aug.*

6. The prayer of Christ is both a ground and an evidence of the undoubted perseverance of the saint. *I pray for them* says he, *even them which thou hast given me. Holy father keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me. I pray not that thou shouldst take them out of the world, but that thou shouldst keep them from the evil. Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word.* Joh. 17. 9, 11, 15, 20. But what Christ hath prayed for, he hath undenyably promised, and assured to his people, for he never prays in vain. Joh. 11. 42. *Who is he that condemneth? and who shall separate us from the love of Christ? shall tribulation, or distress &c. Nay, nor death, nor life, nor angels, nor any thing; but how so? It is Christ that dyed, and that intercedeth too.*

*Rom. 1. 33. &c. yea, He ever liveth to make intercession, and is therefore able to save to the uttermost. Heb. 7. 25. to the uttermost of his peoples necessity, yea, of their capacity, and to the uttermost of eternity. And was that a personal promise? Luke 22. 32.*

7. 7. The pledge and seal of the spirit is another invincible argument of the saints perseverance. *Now he which stablisheth us with you in Christ, and hath anointed us, is God, who hath also sealed us, and given the earnest of the spirit in our hearts. 2. Cor. 1. 21, 22. -- In whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with the holy spirit of promise which is the earnest of our inheritance. Eph. 1. 13, 14.* The earnest is both a seal of the bargain, and a part of it; grace is but the inchoation of glory, and glory the consummation of grace, but God will not lose his earnest (that were not for the honour of his power, wisdom, mercy or truth) and therefore the believer shall be sure.

8. 8. I might summon a whole jury of scripture-witnesses to swear point blank to this assertion. *Job. 13. 1. Having loved his own which were in the world, he loved them <sup>eis telos</sup> to the end, or to the death; which imports both the height and the length of his love; having once lov'd them, he ever lov'd them, and may we not conclude (without blaspheming the see of Rome) that he ever will love them? or dare*

dare we imagine there is less truth, less constancy, less care of the concerns of his church, and in a word, less of God in him now that he is in heaven, than there was while he sojourned with us in the flesh? Is this the fruit of his blessed ascension *Eph. 4. 8. 9. &c.* 'tis true, exaltation and honour often begot this sad issue in sinful mortals; but far be it from our hearts thus to blaspheme the holy one, *Rom. 11. 29. The gifts and calling of God are without repentance*; without any change of affection; the same love that called them, doth still preserve them; he that stoop'd to raise them when they were dead that pittied them in their blood, never repents what he hath done, would do it again if it were to doing. *For if when we were enemies, we were reconciled to God by the death of his son: much more being reconciled, we shall be saved by his life. Rom. 5. 10. Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee; he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved. Psal. 55. 22.* We dare not so dishonour the riches of free grace, or abridge the consolations of the promise, as to confine this Catholick *ἀνέκδοτον* and universal cordial to the dead carcase and worldly concerns of the righteous. May he cast his burden, and not his soul on the Lord? his temporal, and not his spiritual and eternal charge? and will he sustain him, and yet lose the best part of him! yea, sustain him for a moment and fail him to all eternity? graunt this,

ἀμετα-  
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this, and what's the promise worth! nay, *They that trust in the Lord shall be as mount Zion, which cannot be moved, but abideth for ever.* Psal. 125. 1. *Surely he shall not be moved for ever.* Psal. 112. 6. *The righteous is an everlasting foundation.* Pro. 10. 25. *The servant abideth not in the house for ever, but the son abideth for ever.* Job. 8. 35. By son here, we are to understand not Christ onely (though eminently) considering the opposition between the son and the servant; wherein it appears, that *Sons of God*, and *servants of sin* divide the whole family of *Adam*. Nor dare we so impeach the sacred truth of scripture, as to affirm, that these and such others, are onely promises to, not of Perseverance, the general condition, or qualification being once in truth wrought.

9. 9. The work of regeneration and renovation is freely and wholly, of God, both in *esse*, *operari*, & *conservari*. i. e. *It is God that worketh both to will and to do, to do, and to persevere to do, and that of his good pleasure.* Phil. 2. 13. and therefore it is perfect, and permanent. *And of his own will begat he us with the truth.* Jam. 1. 18. not of our wills; but of his own will, which worketh irresistibly, with a grateful and ravishing kind of violence, in the enlightning, converting and assisting influences of his holy spirit. *This people shall be willing in the day of thy power.* Psal. 110. 3.
- God



God hath not left his called in Christ, as once he left us all in Paradise; but hath ratified his covenant in the hand of a mediatur, in whom all the promises of God are *yea*, and *Amen*, for the infallible assurance, and invincible comfort of his people! 'Tis true man hath an instrumentality in this work but 'tis under the conduct and influence of the supream efficient; and it is as impossible for men or devils to raze, as it is to rear this building of God in the soul: but he that is the *Authour* will also be the *finisber* of our faith. *Heb. 12. 2.*

*Qui finit  
fuit et op.*

Besides, we might from the essential properties of this work of grace, prove the perseverance and inviolableness of it, for

1. In the work of conversion God makes 1. such a breach between the soul and sin, as is never to be made up again. *He will subdue our iniquities: and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea. Mich. 7. 19.* But that which is cast into the depths of the sea, is never to be recover'd more. *Ephraim shall say, what have I to do any more with idols? Hos. 14. 8.* 'Tis true, such extorted renouncements, when meerly the abortive fruit of the wine-press of a little wrath, are ordinarily insignificant: and were they onely *Ephraims* words, who, *chap. 7. 16.* was a *deceitful bow*, they would conclude very doubtfully; but they are the promise of God to the remnant of *Ephraim*, and therefore the sure mercies of *David*. *Ephraim shall say*  
what

what have I to do any more with idols? I am weary and ashamed of them, and have done with them for ever. And this promise was ever made good, if not nationally, yet personally to all those to whom it did really belong. This is the great ground of our adversaries mistake; they know no specifical difference between *common* and *special* grace; alas! this is no superfluous, but a real and thorough change, a change not of feature, but of nature, not of the complexion, but of the spiritual constitution; not of Practices only, but of Principles: so that it is morally and relatively as impossible for one that is truly thus renewed, finally to fall away, as it is for a soul to regenerate it self, and this as impossible, as for a child to beget it self, or for a creature arbitrarily to exercise the prerogative power of the Creator.

2. In the work of conversion the soul gives up all of her holds and hopes whatsoever, and casts it self wholly, solely and for ever on God.

*Obj.* But to this may be objected; 'tis an easy and ordinary thing, for persons, (especially under convictions) thus solemnly to resolve, protest and covenant, and yet we see that the best of men are mutable; and 'tis as ordinary and easy to recede and break all such bonds in pieces.

*Ans. 1.* 1. 'Tis an easy matter indeed thus to covenant and engage, at least thus to pretend; but

but how easy the breach of such engagements will prove, those that are guilty will one day find to their sorrow.

2. Those covenants, promises or pretenses, that are taken up without God, in our own strength, or on carnal and selfish ends are not like to hold long; these are the *spiders-webs*, spun out of mens own bowels, as feeble as they are fair; but that covenant, where God is a party, mutually restipulating and setting the seal of his spirit, is sure to hold. There are too many indeed, like *Ananias* and *Sapphira*, who would fain be taken for very zealous admirers of Christ, and pretend to lay down all at his feet; but yet something must be reserv'd for a sore finger; they know not how they may fare; they must have some *peculium*, some private stock of their own to trust to; but these are not the persons in question. He that is truly turn'd from darkness unto light, is turn'd from the power of Satan unto God, he is gone out of the devils reach, though not out of the reach of his temptations, yet out of the reach of his dominion and power; turn'd not onely from the acts, but from the spirit and prevailing principles of apostasy. God deals with his militants in this case, as *William* the Conqueror did with his souldiers, when he invaded *England*, landed his men, and sent back all his ships, that there might be no hope of returning without the victory. We are

*Tutores ex-  
cimus pro-  
rum Deo da-  
mus, non au-  
tem illi ex  
parte, & no-  
bis ex parte  
committimus.*  
Aug.

never

never safer, says *Augustinus* than when we give up all to God, and not partly to him, and partly to our selves.

3. 3. In the work of conversion, Christ is received not onely as Priest and Prophet, but as Lord and King. The heart of the believer is his temple and throne, wherein he reigns, not by courtesy or capitulation, but by absolute prerogative and conquest: and will he disown the interest, and abandon the purchase, for which he hath striven unto blood? if so, it must be either through the mutability of his own purpose, or affection; or else he hath invested the *Free-will* of his creatures with a power to dethrone him and to whip him out of his temple, as often as ever the devil, or their own lust shall thereunto entice them. Let all those cursed foreheads be branded, that cannot blush at such high blasphemy against the omnipotent King of Saints. Nay, on such a position I think it were easy to prove the impossibility of any mans salvation, as well as assurance.

I might insist at large on the many horrid blasphemies and foul absurdities, that would inevitably follow this Anti-christian conclusion of non-perseverance; but that I shall not digress so far, nor run down the whole concatenated chain of *Arminian* principles, which being thorowly broken in one linck, the whole band is loosed.

2. As the Saint cannot fall *finally*, so neither *totally*, from an estate of grace. These two being so mutually convertible and consequential (for if either be graunted, the other can't be denied) I shall not insist here; but onely cast it in, as a brief corollary to the former. Yet I think we may, without prejudice to the truth, graunt, that the saint may, for a time, fall totally, that is, from the visible and demonstrative exercise of grace, though not from a sound and real estate of grace.

What is commonly objected from the *Obj. 1.* instances of such as have fallen, either gradually, or finally, may be answer'd by one of those two ways.

1. They are either such as were never in- *Ans. 1.* dued with true sanctifying grace, according to Christs words. *Luk. 8. 18. Whosoever hath not, from him shall be taken even that which he seemeth to have;* ὁ δὲ οὐκ ἔχει, that which he makes a shew of, which he thinketh and is thought to have. *They went out from us, but they were not of us; for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us. But ye have an unction from the holy One, and know all things, Joh. 2. 19, 20.* They were once in the church indeed, in body; but not in spirit, *For* *Rom 9. 6.* *they are not all Israel, which are of Israel, as dead branches in the vine, and therefore they drop away, and are cast out as excrements, or ill humours from the body, blown off, as chaff from*



*Nemo existimet bonos de Ecclesia posse discedere, tricicum non rapis ventum, nec arborem fatidā radice fundatam procella subvertit, Inanes Palen semperstate jactantur: invalida arbores turbinis incurfione evertuntur.*  
Cyp. de Unit. Eccl.

the floor; *But ye*, which are the called according to his purpose, *have an unction from the holy One*, and therein a protection, the holy oyl of consecration is upon you. You need not fear, the spiritual witchcraft of the seducer shall have no power over you; your life is hid and there is no enchantment shall prevail against you. Ye know all things, though not absolutely, nor perfectly, yet as far as it is needful for you to know, that spirit of truth which ye have received shall guide you into all truth. *Many false Prophets shall arise and shall deceive many, insomuch that (if it were possible) they shall deceive the very Elect*, but it is impossible, *Matth. 24. 11. 24 comp.*

2. Or else they neither finally nor totally fall away: 'Tis true the righteous fall frequently, and sometimes foully; but yet they fall not away, *For a just man falleth seven times and riseth up again, but the wicked fall into mischief, Prov. 24. 16.* The seed remaineth, the stump is left in the earth which springs again. Know this then for thy comfort, O Christian! if thou art in truth what thou art called, thy grace is no perishing accident, 'tis not an artificial varnish of the earthly extraction, nor the aerial colour of a lofty rainbow; but a spiritual and immortal substance, a spark of celestial fire, a beam of divine light, which shall never die.

*Mallet verū fidelium robur immobilit.*  
Cyp. Ep.

**Obj. 2.** But it is further objected: that Gods covenant



nant is conditional, and not absolute, as *Ezek. 33. 13. Rom. 2. 7. Heb. 10. 38. 1 Cor. 15. 2.* &c. and if the covenant it self be but conditional, where is the sure and infallible ground of this perseverance?

It is true, the covenant is conditional *sensu Ans. diviso*, but not *complexo*, that is, the salvation promised in the covenant is conditional of faith, obedience and perseverance; but this condition is also part of the promise, and is absolute to all the elect, *Jer. 31. 33. chap. 32. 40. Ezek. 36. 26, 27.* and therefore in effect the covenant it self is absolute, for though a condition be required, yet the fulfilling of that condition is also determined.

That which is alledged from *Matth. 12. Obj. 3. 43.* that the unclean spirit may return with seven worse, after that he was once gone out; may be answer'd thus.

The going out of the unclean spirit supposes some external reformation; but no real sanctification; and therefore his return concludes no falling from grace. Observe, the unclean spirit is not said to be cast out, assaulted and overcome by a sacred violence, as it is in the work of confession; but ἐξέλθῃ, he goes out freely, with a purpose and liberty to return at his pleasure. He goes out indeed, but carries the key with him, will not quit his interest, goes out on design; or, it may be, being haunted by the terrible ghost of a guilty conscience,

science, hopes for a quieter dwelling under the roof of a higher profession; but finding this too dry for the greedy thirst of his unclean heart, and missing that carnal rest, advantage and content which he promised himself; either the sun of righteousness shining too hot for him, in the power of the gospel, or the sun of persecution in the cross of Christ, he is offended, and resolves to return to his own house *εις τὸ οἶκόν μου*. Observe, though he had left it a while, yet 'twas his *own* still, his own earthly mindedness, his own prophanness, pride, atheism, idolatry, &c. and in this case we see that men ordinarily grow seven times worse than they were before. So it is said of *Judas*, that after he had received the sop, the devil entred into him, *Job. 13. 27*. The devil was in him before, *ver. 2*. but then the unclean spirit return'd to his house again, and took a fuller possession of him.

*Obj. 4.* Lastly, it may be objected, that this doctrine tends to licentiousness. If our eternal salvation doth effectually depend on the unchangeable decree of an absolute election, and there be an impossibility of falling away; then may we live as we list; our sin cannot frustrate Gods decree; for who hath resisted his will? what need then so much ado to be saved? the foundation of God standeth sure. Away with all these precepts and threatnings, which do but beget a slavish terrour in mens minds. Away

way with ordinances, and duties, and scripture, and all. Down with the power of godliness and all that tends thereunto. What hath Christ to do with a kingdom, or laws among men? Welcome Epicurism! welcome Atheism! farewell this preaching, and praying, and fasting, and repenting, those wearisome sabbaths and burdensome duties: if God will save us, he will save us, and if he will damn us, who can help it? our preciseness will never alter his purpose,

1. We are not ignorant, nor doth it a little *Ans.* shame and grieve us, that this is the ungodly inference which some, who turn the grace of God into wantonness, being void both of religion and humanity, do draw from such Evangelical truths. A sophism of hells suggestion, and of *Romes* prostitution. A conclusion *eiusdem farinae* near of the same complexion with that which the apostle condemns with an *abfit*, *Rom. 6. 1, 2.* *What shall we say then? shall we sin that grace may abound? or shall we sin because it is censur'd? God forbid.*

2. But doth this doctrine indeed father such an impiety? how then doth the Apostle reason in the very next words? *How shall we that are dead to sin, live any longer therein?* we are dead, and can the dead raise themselves? yea, *We are buried with him into death, ver. 4.* and can we break those sacred barrs, and return at our pleasure? 'Tis true, sin is some-

times but a little strangl'd, like some malefactors on the gibbet, who afterward recover life again, and if they can so escape, may return to their old villanies too; but if they are once thorowly dead, and buried, nay buried into death it self, surely then they are safe enough. So then this cavil hath just so much truth and reason in it as this comes to. That the onely way to gratify, abette and encourage a thief, is to convict and hang him; or that an enemy is never so much to be feared, as when he is dead and buried. We confess a dying *Carthage* may create *Rome* more trouble, than when it flourish'd, this case is the common experience of the saints in their spiritual warfare, but yet the victory is sure, though parting sprawls be terrible, they are not triumphant.

3. Though God hath from all eternity ordained his elect unto life, and undoubtedly assured their perseverance, yet he hath also ordained them unto good works, as the way and meanes thereunto. *Eph. 2. 10. For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them. This is the will of God even our sanctification, 1 Theff. 4. 3. his will & signi & beneplaciti, both of precept and of purpose, and what door is there open'd here to licentiousness? God will have his people give diligence to make their calling and election sure, that is subjective, sure to themselves, in the*

the conscientious use of his appointed means. *God hath not called us unto uncleanness, but unto holiness, 1 Thess. 4. 7.* For as he hath ordained the end, so he hath together therewith ordained the means. Is the ingrafting of the stock with the choicest fruit and the binding it fast and secure, the way to corrupt; or to correct and better the fruit? I shall say no more at present, onely let any one reconcile this madness to sober reason and wisdom, *seeing God hath absolutely decreed how long I shall live in the world, therefore may I feed on poyson, or leap into the midst of the sea, or throw my self over the highest rocks, and alter by refuse the preservation of my life by any natural or rational means, and yet do well,* and then will I give up the cause, and subscribe my recantation.

3. The righteous, though they many 3. times fall sadly and shamefully, yet not as the wicked fall. 'Tis true, they are both liable to the same temptations, and to the same transgressions, for the matter of them; there is the same natural constitution, temper and disposition, the same flesh and blood, the same cours of providence and common condition, for the most part, to them both; *All things happen alike to all.* The same flatteries, frownes, stromes &c. from the world; Satan hath the same wiles, methods and insinuations with both, and the same common instruments too. So the falls themselves both for matter and

1 Tim. 3. 13.

Jer. 9. 5.

Jer. 8. 6.

Joh. 15. 16.

Jer. 6. 15.

Joh. 8. 34.

material aggravations, are often alike, which I need not stand to instance. But in their causes and issues they are very unlike. The one sins from a predominant, the other from a dying principle of unbelief; the wicked falls continually, and therefore God is angry with him every day; he falls like a stone, that never rests till it come to bottom, grows worse and worse, 'tis his trade. *They have taught their tongues to speak lies, and weary themselves to commit iniquity.* He falls presumptuously, and rushes headlong on the snare; he makes it his business and delight to drink iniquity like water; without any effectual remorse. *Were they ashamed, when they had committed abomination? nay, they were not at all ashamed, neither could they blush.* But the righteous doth not commit sin, as the servant of sin. He often committ's indeed, as well as omitts, but both *nolo-volente animo*, with an unwilling kind of willingness, through his ignorance, weakness and unwatchfulness, and the power of temptations, against the habitual inclination of his soul; 'tis not his pleasure, but his terrors; 'tis not his trade, but his lamented loss; every step this way is so much out of his way, which with double diligence he labours and hastens to recover; though he fall, he is quickly on his feet again, at least on his knees, and is really griev'd, and ashamed to think on what he hath done. I might illu-

strate



strate this case more orderly and amply; but I hope what I have said may give the honest and unbyass'd reader satisfaction.

Here I might have subjoyned a practical word or two concerning the accidental disparity of the back-slidings of Saints and sinners; but that I referr it to another place. We are next to consider the *Quomodo sit*, or the termes *à quo & ad quem*, what the back-slider back-slides from, and what he back-slides to. And observe that we are now speaking of the back-slider onely as such.

1. What he back-slides from; and that 1.

In Respect of } Duty.  
                              } Priviledge.

In respect of *Duty*, he backslides

1. From his *covenant* of duty. The obedience we owe to God is a covenanted obedience. *Turn ô back-sliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you. Jer. 3.14.* we are married, and may not part without breach of covenant, therefore, *I will judge thee as women that break wedlock and shed blood on the judged. Ezek. 16.38.* The back-slider is a covenant breaker; one that had once past it under his hand and seal, at least *baptismally*, to be true and faithful to him that called him; that was hir'd by the *penny*, and bound by indented covenants and agreement *Matth. 20.13.* but these bonds he breaks and stretches out his hand to a strange God, he leaves

his colours and turnes *renegado*, his oath of obedience is shaken off for a yoke of bondage; he that was once ingag'd for God to run all adventures with and for him, that was once resolv'd to deny himself, to take up his cross and to follow the lamb through good report and bad report, through wet and heat, through all duties and providences, that talk'd (perhaps) so light of his experiences and attainments, and was so ravish'd with the joyes of heaven, the tastes of the powers of the world to come, and a confident expectation of more than his ambitious heart could wish; that was even eaten up with a strange kind of seraphick zeal, could trample on the world and challenge the gates of hell; that was so taken with his service, and pittied all those, for babes or worse, that were strangers to his wonderful consolations; that could protest to scorn all the crownes and scepters of the world for a *door-keepers* place in the house of God, even such a one is now grown weary of his admired service. He that just now could leave his meat & his sleep for his work, yea, & life and all; that was ever and anon solemnly resigning up all to God, and devoting himself to his duty; that would be carried out in prayer, preaching, or conference in such patheticall raptures, that you would think an Angel were sprung out of heaven among you. He that would even scorn that another should  
outvie

ontvie him in knowledge, love or labour, that was alway calling on others, watching, censuring and condemning them of this and that and the other fault; even this zealote, (though indeed all arrive not to such a pitch) now flings off all; burnes his indentures; pick's up what he can finger, and away he goes, pack and fardle for a new master. It may be, to the *world*, he sues for service. Come, *Mammon*, thou shalt be my Lord, I will serve thee; give me but thus many inches of thy silken rags, thus many foot on thy fat dunghill, thus many grains of thy yellow clay, and I will be thy trusty and painful drudge; thou shalt command me early and late, my time, my strength, my parts, my heart, my all I devote to thee. Or, it may be, he resolves to raunt it out with his *lusts*, and these shall make him a free man, like that fool, *Luk. 12. 19.* *Soul thou hast much goods layd up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry.* Thou hast serv'd thy hard master long enough; break this bondage now, and get thee free, free to drink, free to swear, free to whore, and swagger, and ly and cheat as others do, free to ruine thy body, thy estate, thy posterity, free to dishonour God, and to damn thy own soul. This is the course the back-slider is taking, he breakes the covenant of his obedience; though not always professedly and finally; yet gradually, virtually and really he does it.

2. He

2. He back-slides from a *heart* to duty. *Ephraim is like a silly dove without heart. Hos. 7. 11.* and how long hath it been so with him? but since he departed from God; departing from him he lost his heart; is worn away to a meer shadow, nothing left of him but the very skeliton, the skin and bones of a professor; his faith and love and zeal and all his other graces, as fair and full as once they were, or seem'd to be, are strangely wither'd into a dead and dry formality; and no wonder, he hath exchang'd his *fountain* for a *cisterne*, and his *fathers house*, with its fulness and al sufficient plenty, for a *trough* among the swine. No wonder if that stomach be ill-affected, that hath lick't up its own vomit. The farther any one goes from God the less desire he hath towards him, back-sliding is a going awhoring from God; but *whoredom, and wine, and new wine steal away the heart. Hos. 4. 11.* 'Tis a bewitching of the affections, either with *flavish fear. I heard thy voice in the garden, and I was affraid, because I was naked.* The burden of guilt keeps the soul in bondage under the secret condemnations of conscience; it is affraid to look into it self, where this lyon is like to meet it, or with a *sinful shame*, which shifts off the duty to other persons, or to other times, when it may be in a better temper, is asham'd to draw near to God, while some kind of conviction abides fresh on the spirit; and

Gen. 3. 10.

so through the deceitfulness of sin, the heart is more and more hardned and estranged from him, and at length its duty becomes a matter of the greatest indifferency, or a burthen wherein there is no profit nor pleasure: like those Atheists, *Mal. 3. 14.* *It is vain to serve God, and what profit is it that we have kept his ordinance, and that we have walked mournfully before the Lord of hosts?* Ordinances and duties are but poor, low and legal things with them, and (since the *Jesuite* hath lighted on that triumphant atheisme) many there be, that proclaim their apostasy in a professed rejection of duties and ordinances, on a proud pretense of higher and more spiritual attainments. Time was, they could have received the word with joy, and taken delight to approach near to God, when they could rise early and sit up late in hearing, fasting, praying, reading, catechising &c. but now the favour of these things is lost, and every other business is of greater concernment with them; they can't find that in duties to sweeten and sanctify them; and no marveile, while they can't find God in them. Sometimes it seizes on the *senses* with a gross stupidity, nothing can move or affect them, no blowes will reach home; the swiftest and sharpest arrowes of threatnings or judgements fall all short of them, they are grown dull and thick, this *spiritual callum* hath so mail'd up the heart, that

that the sword of the spirit, in its ordinary methods, can't enter; that which would once draw tears from their eyes; will not now cost them one serious thought, they can't concern themselves with those things that were once cryed up by them, for the matters of highest consequence; the terrour of the business is over, the flash is gone, & this high promising spirit proves an arrant block. Lastly, sometimes it issues in a hellish *fury* and desperate horror; which receives the depth of its aggravation from the height of that other extrem, from whence they fall, from the very pinnacle of an imaginary happiness and beguiled joy, to the lowest pit of fear and disappointment, from the fore-tasts of heaven to a fearful looking for of judgement.

3. He back-slides from the *heart* of duty: what he does is but the picture and pageantry of godliness; there's no substance, no reality in it. A sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal, curious aires, and very taking with a credulous and fond ear, but alas! they are poor dead; empty things, the principle of their action is from without, either the interest of the flesh, or the applause of men, or the common convictions and slavish fears of conscience is the main spring of all his religious motions. The *wind* of his devotions, confessions, supplications and protestations may seem to rend the mountains and break the rock of his heart



heart in pieces, yet God is not in the *wind*; though the *Earthquake* of his affections, fears, hopes or joyes seem to discover the very bottom and foundations of his soul, yet the Lord is not in this *Earthquake*; though the *fire* of his zeal seem to rise in a lofty flame of courage, confidence and resolution, yet the Lord is not in the *fire*; it all proceeds but from his cisterne, which hath no participation with, nor influence from the fountain, which he hath forsaken. When he prays 'tis meerly by the strength of his parts, and the working of natural affections, there's none of that intercession of the spirit, with groanings that cannot be uttered; when he hears, the word dyes in his ears, or is committed to the close cabinet of a trusty memory, to be brought forth on occasion for the service of his vain glory; all the excellency of his duties lies in the bare natural or moral accomplishment of them.

4. He loses his *strength* in duties; grows weak and feeble, apt to tire and faint; every temptation is become too hard for him, his heart is grown fat and gross and indispos'd for service. He loses the strength of judgement, every carnal suggestion puzzles him, and every wind of false doctrine oversets him; 'tis an easy matter to draw a back-slider into any error, the God of this world hath blinded his eyes. 'Tis true, the natural subtilty may be retained, and

and is sometimes improved too; but to sad purpose, to wrangle with the truth and to wrest it to their destruction, yet as sophistically or learnedly as it is possible for an error to be pleaded it proceeds not from the ability, but the infirmity of the judgement; scripture, reason, tradition, or the like may be cunningly and strongly urged, and with admirable ingenuity; so that there is a strength indeed, but it is the strength of the distemper, which bespeaks the person to be by so much the weaker; strong delusions argue weak apprehensions, or reprobate conditions. But this is not all; he loses the strength of will too, duties begin to be a task and a weariness to him; every little rub turns him out of his way; a frown, or a scold, or a threat, or some small tryal or trouble overcomes him, and by degrees he insensibly loses ground; and grows more dead and formal in duties, and more indisposed to them, will perhaps at length he throws off all and turns Atheist, the apostate age wherein we live, may produce too many such dismal instances. He is like a man at sea that falls over board in a storm, he plunges and strives a while for his life, and catches at those ropes or poles that are cast out for him; but the seas beat him off, he loses his hold, waxes fainter and at last is thrown out dead on the shoar. Ah Sirs! 'tis dangerous falling over board in such perillous times as these

these are ; without a wonder of grace you are like to perish eternally ; and will it not be a sad story when you shall be found dead on the shoar of the other world ? Ah ! how many thousands are there , that are like thus to miscarry forever ? that tumble from one step to another till it be too late to returne ? The farther the stone roules , with the greater force it is driven , till at last it may be dangerous to attempt to stop it ; this is the sad case with the Back-slider , first he begins to fear , and then to reason with flesh and blood ; this advises to remitt his zeal , and to make some intermissions of his duty , as may consist with his worldly safety or advantage , next , it may be , he throwes off all , and then disownes it too , begins to take an open pleasure in unrighteousness , and by degrees becomes a blasphemer , an idolater , a persecutor &c. Ah my brethren ! you little think what the tendency of those first slips , those small beginnings is. Remember ! every second step from God and your duty is wont to double the first ; the farther you go this way , the larger you stride still ; what you loose in your constancy you lose in your security ; to let down the exercise of your duty is to let go your strength in duty.

5. He loses the fruit of his duties. *Look to your selves , that we loose not those things which we have wrought , but that we receive a full reward.* 2 Joh. ver. 8. *Look to your selves ,*

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Gal. 3. 4.

take heed, if you let go here, you are undone; you loose all, 'tis never the near for all that you have done, no nor for all that you have suffer'd neither; as the Apostle tells the *Galatians*, all your fasting and praying and reading and hearing and watchings and travels and sufferings come to nothing; therefore look to your selves, to your principles and to your perseverance, that you loose not the things that ye have wrought; the fruit of them, present or eternal.

1. *The present fruit;* Duties don't at all advantage the back-slider: let him pray and fast and meditate and seem (for he doth but seem) to humble himself before God; he is never a foot the nearer God for all this; his very duties are some of his retrograde motions, even while he seems to be mounting upward, on the painted wings of his devotion, he is but sinking downward; nay, every duty as well as every other sin, sets him at a greater distance from God. He hath none of that real, inward, spiritual joy and peace, that gracious acceptance, and heavenly communion with an influence from God, as the saint has; he falls on his knees and presents his carcass before the Lord, performs his homage as the mode of the times or of some affected party, and the common illuminations and workings of the spirit do dictate; but when he hath done, he finds himself never the better, but in a fond proud

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conceit, and if he neglect it, he can't find and that he is the worse; he comes to the fountain with his pitcher on his shoulder, as others do, but 'tis in the devil's errand; so that he goes as he comes, for ought others, yea, it may be, for ought he himself perceives; but let him know that there is that secret wheel of self-deceit, within the wheel of his profession, that will shortly turn to that point that shall convincingly shew him what a clock it is with his soul.

2. The eternal fruit; duties don't profit him in this nor in the other world; he waits on converting ordinances; but goes away hardened; on the means of salvation, but goes away condemned; seeks to enter but is not able, he prays for grace, but goes away graceless; for faith, but remains in his unbelief still; for humility, but is as proud as ever; for patience, but is never the more patient; for sincerity, but holds fast his deceit; for wisdom, but dies a fool, for heaven and eternal glory, but away he goes to hell at last; for thitherward is he going and will he go, even while he thus prays. Oh! methink this should fill our hearts with a holy jealousy, and serious thoughts of our selves. If this be my condition, Lord! in what a case am I? If I am not going forward, whither am I going? in vain do I pray for Christ, while I secretly purpose to run from Christ, and in vain do I hope for heaven, while I am thus sliding away to hell, Oh! let these things

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things awaken our back-sliding hearts, and the good Lord awaken them, that we may be prepared, to receive that instruction in this grand case, which through Gods assistance may hereafter be offered.

Thus far the Back-slider revolts from his *duty*; we are now to consider what he back-slides from in respect of *Privilege*.

1. *r.* I might tell you all in a word: he back-slides from *God*, and what hath he more?

*Obj.* What have I more? may the Back-slider think: nay, what have I the less? here I have what I would have; the wealth, the peace, the pleasures, the honours, the friends, the things I aim at: all this I loose, or greatly impair, if I hold fast such a profession; 'tis true, there are many that talk of their great enjoyments and experiences; that they find more in God, than in all the good in the world besides; but for my part, I can't believe them; I have tryed both, but I never yet found any thing better to me than my estate, my pleasures, my friends, &c. if I can but get and keep these, all other losses will signify but little with me.

*Ans.* Sinner! dost thou find any of this *Atheism* working in thy breast? doth the loss of God seem a light thing with thee? dost thou wonder indeed, that there are some that find more in the fountain, than thou canst enjoy in the stream, which thy own foot hath pudd'd, and wherein the filthy swine of the earth do  
dayly



daily wallow? Oh that I could sufficiently lament thy madness. What this world is, that (*Demas-like*) thou so admirest, thou mayst see in part if thou wilt read but a little farther; but what this God is, how great, how good, whom thy soul hath despised, no tongue, nor pen can express, nor heart conceive, and therefore thy loss herein is altogether as unconceivable; but as far as our finite and crooked thoughts can span, we will examine a little more distinctly what this loss amounts to.

1. He that looses God, looses the love of I. God. *My soul shall abhor you; my very bowels shall harden themselves, and my heart shall turn against you. As he looses his own love to God, so he looses the love of God to him; but loose this, and you loose all.* *Lev. 26. 30.*

1. Loose his love and you loose his favour; and ah sirs! do you know what it is to loose such a friend? go ask the ruines of *Shiloh*, and the desolations of *Jerusalem*, the ancient blood of *Germany*, and the later tears of *Ireland*, these may tell us in part, what it is for God to turn his heart against a people; ask an afflicted conscience, this will tell you much, but could you ask the damned, they would tell you more than your ears are able to bear; or ask those that know, and love, and enjoy him, these will guess what it is to loose him. To loose a dear friend in this world is a loss too great, but the loss of an onely friend is an un-

doing loss; to loose a friend in heaven, yeay our onely heavenly friend, is a loss indeed; to loose the being or presence of a friend by death is sad enough, but to loose the heart of him, while alive, is worst of all. I might here open the greatness of this loss, by shewing you how great, how good, how ready, how sutable, how allsufficient and how sure a friend God is, but I referr it to a more distinct and fuller consideration under the *Motives*.

2. 2. Loose his love, and you loose his *Care*; men will not care for what they do not love; no, let it go, *abeat in crucem*, who cares for it? *He is joined to his Idols*, let him alone, let him take his fill of them, and be as Idolatrous as he will: if the *Calves* at *Dan* and *Bethel* will not serve his turn, let him away to *Moloch*, to *Astaroth*, to *Baal*, to *Dagon*, to *Rome*, let him fill the *chambers of his imagery*: he is resolv'd to please himself, and let him, till he hath undone himself; he is grown weary of me, and I am as weary of him; let him take his mad course, and let what mischiefs will betide him; there's no hand to protect him, no price to redeem him, no balm to heal him, no eye to pity him, because no heart to love him. This is the Back-sliders case, he is one that God cares not for, that's left to his own shifts, and how honest or honourable such shifts are, we may guess, if we are too blind to see. *Our bones are dryed, and our hope is lost, we are cut off for*

*Nos. 4. 17.*

*1 King. 12. 28.*

*Ezek. 37. 11.*

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*our parts.* All the probable ways of human reason are blockt up, we are the people that are cast out by men, and cast off by God; no one careth for us, but to robb and spoil, no one seeketh after us, but for our hurt; hence it is that every snare lays hold on the Back-slider, and every temptation is too hard for him; he is left to himself, hath neither *sun* nor *shield* to direct or protect him. *Jer. 30. 17.*

4. Loose his love and you loose his *peace*; even that *peace which passeth all understanding*; that perfect, real peace, that inward, spiritual peace, that peace which the world can't give, nor take away, that everlasting peace. Oh! how sweet a word is peace that hath so many sweets in the bowels of it? loose your peace and you loose all, at least the comfort of all: what will health avail you, if peace be gone; riches are a trouble, friend a grief, life it self a burden, if there be no peace, the strength of armies, the confederacies of kingdoms, the presences of princes, fortresses at home, fleets abroad, all this and a thousand such priviledges more are but formidable happineses, and comforts imbitter'd with terrour, where peace is wanting. But *there is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked, Isai. 57. 21.* What no peace? why these are the onely men, for the most part, that seem to enjoy peace, that have gotten the monopoly of it, and huckster it out to others at rates sometimes dearer than their blood;

They are not in trouble like other men, neither are they plagued like other men, *Psal. 73. 5.* and yet they are far enough from peace; because far from the God of peace. Their present quiet is but the short *Praeludium* to their eternal troubles: they may have the worlds peace, and the devils peace; but they have none of Gods peace.

2. He departs from the ways of God. God and the Back-slider walk counter to each other; they are not agreed, and therefore cannot walk together. The ways of God are ways of *light*, he is the *Father of light*, and his children the *children of light*; but the ways of the back-slider are the ways of *darkness*, and the ways to darkness. The ways of God are ways of *Truth and verity*, of truth and *simpli-city*; but the back-sliders ways are ways of *falshood* and dissimulation. Gods way is the way of *love* and charity, of *peace* and revenge, & *strife*, &c. and of destruction and perdition. Gods way is pure, wise, holy and clean; but the back-sliders are *fortish*, *preposterous*, *per-verse*, *licentious*, *idolatrous*, *beastly* ways, in a word the one is Gods, the other the devils way.

3. He resisteth the Spirit of God, grieves and quenches, yea offers *despight unto the spirit of Grace*, *Heb. 10. 29.* he sins against checks and convictions: conscience doubts, debates, demurs, regrets and enters her serious *exortations*; 'Tis not all well within, wishes 'twere other-  
wise

*Jan. 1. 17.*

*Eph. 5. 8.*

*1 Joh. 2. 11.*

*Pf. 119. 30.*

*Isa. 28. 15.*

*1 Joh. 4. 8.*

*Gal. 3. 8.*

*Heb. 10. 39.*

wife : but yet he goes on, hopes the time will mend, and then he resolves to mend too : but in the mean time he dares not but do as he does ; the fear of men brings the snare upon him ; he acknowledges his failings are very foul ; it may be scandalous, but 'tis the *law in his members*, he wishes he could help it ; and hopes that one time or other it may be done. Sirs ! the devil is forc'd sometimes to sow his *tares* in a storm, and yet they thrive nevertheless. At length the *lees* begin to settle and the violence of the fit is over ; he hears no more of these questions and scruples, 'tis all still, and therefore concludes 'tis all well. Time was that he had a vigilant monitor within, he could not sin in peace, could not ly, nor equivocate, nor give up the reins to any secret lust, but conscience would presently be at him for it, it cost him some sad reflections, and inward feares ; but now he can sin with more freedom, conscience has done, at least, as to the faithfulness ; vigour and terror of it, *My spirit shall not alway strive with him.* Thus long have we been a treating, he hath pretended a deal of willingness, hath spoken me fair, and carried it fairly too a while, but now the plague-sore of his heart is broken out upon him ; *When I would have healed Israel, then the iniquity of Ephraim was discovered, and the wickedness of Samaria,* my spirit shall strive no more, let them take their course, let their con-  
Gen. 6. 3.  
Hos. 7. 1.



ctionsdy within them till they quicken again to  
 better purpose in hell, either in the hell of a deep  
 and evangelical repentance, or the hell of a  
 dreadful and eternal vengeance. Now first, what  
 think you of such a case as this? are you ambi-  
 tious of such a happiness? is it a desirable con-  
 dition? I think I may tell you, without an *hyper-  
 bole*, it were better for you, as to yourselves,  
 that you were hurried away, body and soul  
 quick to hell; conscience would have less to  
 say now, than it is like to have, ten or twenty  
 or thirty years hence. 'Tis true, he that hath ut-  
 terly sinn'd away convictions, and layd his  
 conscience waste, may yet walk up and down  
 the world, through duties and ordinances, as  
 he was wont to do, and never so much as suspect  
 his case. The tree is not alway cut down and  
 thrown into the fire as soon as it dies; possibly  
 the husbandman may see it useful in the place  
 as it stands, though it be dead, both as to fruit  
 and leaves; and while it stands in the open air  
 with the rest, it shares in the common blessings  
 of heaven with them: but what ever it enjoyes,  
 there's nothing quickens it, till it moulder a-  
 way into the dust; this is the case, I fear, with  
 thousands, that think they have no need to fear.  
 Oh! that God would awaken us, either by *word*  
 or *Rod*, and cause us to cast our eyes inward; 'tis  
 in vain to dawb and flatter and sow figleaves,  
 and feed our hopes with the *Ashes* of our own  
 delusions, every step of back-sliding is one step  
 from



from the spirit of God, either as to the directing, or quickning, or comforting office of it. Grieve the spirit, and the spirit will sooner or later grieve you, deny it your obedience, and it will deny you it's presence; never did any get by grieving the good spirit of God, the quenching of this holy fire kindles a hellish one. Let the back-sliding be what it will, and whose it will, though of some of the dearest saint of God in the world, with whom the holy spirit doth and will strive by vertue of that standing intrest it hath in them, yet they loose very much of it's blessed influence; the heavenly light of it is clouded, and hence they wander into errours and idolatries; the heat of it is repell'd, and hence they turn aside to warm themselves by the fire of their own lusts, and when ever God whips them home to himself, they are wont to smart for it.

4. He back-slides from the *people* of God. 4. If his apostasy be professed, or open and scandalous, he looses.

1. Their fellowship and *communion*; and 1. what a curse is it for a person to be cut off, yea, what a wickedness to cut himself off from the communion of saints? The great intrest of the world is bound up in and with the saints; were it not for these, what work would God quickly make with the rest? when there was but one *Noah* to be found in a whole world, he and his family is cared for, but we be to the

*Acerbum est  
uri, quanto  
acerbius si id  
te faciente  
patiaris? Senec. 12.*

the rest. These are the *Tutelares*, the pillars of the places where they are; ten righteous persons would have saved four or five citties, had they been found in them; yea who knows, but that half the number might have done it? were it not for the wheat that's in the field; the tares and thornes would soon be set on fire. When God picks out his people, as *Jeremys* figs were picked. *Jer. 24.* beg. whither by death, or banishment, or any other providence; though he glean away but the principal clusters, the *first ripe*, 'tis a signe that he is coming to visit, both to refine the one and to consume the other. The times of foul apostasy are wont to be times of fierce jealousy, at least, preparatives thereunto. Let *London* witness, as well as *Sodom*; when God separates his friends from his enemies, either as to *place* or *party*, 'tis wont to be to this dreadful end, that, as soon as they are ripe for judgement, he may take his full blow at them, that he may pass through them at once and burn them together. *Isa. 26. 19.* *Come my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee; stand ye aside, go hide your selves, get ye out of the way, that I may spend my arrows upon them, though ye be cast out, and driven into your corners, yet so far are your enemies and I agreed, turn aside into these corners till the indignation be overpast. Come out of her my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive*

receive not of her plagues. How far'd it with the Egyptians, when once God had mark't up the Israelites doors, with the blood of the passover. *Exod. 12, 13.* And how it far'd with them, when in one and the same act, they both banish'd and releas'd them, the known history reports at large. So when God was about to deal with *Corah* and his complices for their conspiracy against *Moses*, he first separates the people from their tents. *Num. 16. 24.* God is among his people, his Tabernacle is in *Jacob*; when once you sever your selves from these, you set your selves as a bult against the arrows of the Almighty, and dare him to let fly at you. O Sirs! take heed how you desert the company, intrest and communion of the saints, I do not say, of this or that proud, hypocritical, discontented, self-seeking or atheistical partie, but of the saints; the blessing spiritual & temporal is bound up with them; these are the men that are like to come alive to shoar; therefore lay hold on them, that if by any means, they may be as your planks and boards, whereon you may recover out through grace. God is on their side, if you leave them you appear in arms against God. This is the general posture of all the world, our life is a warfare, and every mortal breathing is at war either for or against God, and God and his church is engag'd against all the world besides. Now the Backslider doubt's it seems, of the issue, therefore what

what ever become of Christ or his church, he thinks it is his wisdom to consult his safety, in chusing the rising side, and so appears in the field against his maker, and will the devil his captain suffer him to be idle here? no, no, there are no such things as neuters in this case. How ever men may flatter themselves with their peaceableness and innocency, when God shall tell them the scripture English of their *carnal mind*, and negative righteousness, their worldly prudence, and inward hatred of the power of godliness, it will then appear with whom they are at war. And oh sirs! dare you side with Gods enemies? and sort your selves with them that fight against him? dare you set up your standard and bid defiance to the God of *Israel*? yet this is that which every Back-slider is doing more or less, according to the degree of his back-sliding. What's that makes the sentence of excommunication so dreadful, but this cutting off from the communion of the saints? (though it be become a yoke of unjust oppression, or a vain, life-less bug-bear, or a matter of filthy lucre in this degenerate age of our's) which is the representation for a warning of an eternal *separation* from them. Look to it sirs! if you would be number'd among the living branches, abide in the living stock in which they are all united and live; if once you are broken of, though by the stormes of persecution, you drop away and wither, and at last will be gathered up for the fire. Again

Rom. 8. 7.  
 2 Cor. 12.  
 30.

Geop. 12.  
 201.

Again consider, by loosing this fellowship with the people of God you loose the benefit of their *counsels*. These are the persons that would instruct you in the great things of God; their tongues will be talking of wisdom, they are eyes to the blind, feet to the lame, physicians to the sick, and *preachers of righteousness* in their generations and spheres: *their lips drop as the hony-comb, hony and milk are under their tongue; and the smell of their garments is like the smell of Lebanon.* Contr. 4. 11.

Yea, you loose the advantage of their *exam- 3.* *ples* too, which is ordinarily the more effectual way to instruct: these would go before you, and line out the way of life to your very eyes and senses, their examples would make things easy to be understood, and easy to be done, which it may be seem so intricate and difficult in the doctrine and theories. Of these you might learn how to manage the duties, both of your general and particular callings, how to bear crosses, and to gain by them too; how to improve time; how to order and instruct your families; how to comport your selves with all providences, and towards all relations, degrees and tempers of men, wherein lies the excellency both of a man, and of a Christian. 'Tis true, saints indeed are far thinner in the earth than butterflies in summer, neither are the doctrines of lives of the wisest or holiest of them the adequate rules of our faith



faith or obedience; but yet if well observ'd, compar'd and improv'd they may be useful auxiliaries, and demonstrative expositions of that which the letter leaves more obscure. The people of God are like travellers, that beat the way one before another, 'tis a dangerous and troublesome road for the most part, they travel in, and those that ramble from the beaten track, through fear, singularity, disdain &c. have been ever wont to foyl themselves in one mire or ditch or other, to the foul reproach both of themselves and their companions.

4. You also by this means loose the participation of their *comforts*, the comforts of the holy Ghost are the Saints cordials, these are their dishes of *sweet-meats*; not the *cane from a far country*, nor the artificial *shewes* of their own blinding; but the *comfort wherewith they themselves are comforted of God*. Though they delight not to boast of their great experiences, nor lead every one by and by into their closets, or set forth all their treasure, and painted sheards on the altars of their cup-boards; yet they know how to offer a word in season, and lead their shoulders to set another's burden upright, which is almost as much as the bearing of it; what ever they produce in this kind, is for edification or approbation, not for ostentation. But all this the back-slider looses, he tastes none of their banquets, partakes in none of

a Cor. i. 4.

of their rarities, if any thing of this nature be occasionally offer'd him, he finds no relish nor savour in it.

Nay, lastly, you loose the benefit of their *prayers*, and would you know what a loss this is? Consider what a powerful interest they have in God (as poor and contemptible a generation as they are in the world) that they can even *command him concerning the work of his hands*, who is therefore called a *God bearing prayers*. Was *Blastus* such a friend to the *Tyrians* and *Sidonians* for the interest he had in *Herod*? and are not the saints as good as *Blastus*, who have a more prevailing power with the God of heaven? the loss of one of these may for ought thou knowest prove the loss of thy soul. So what large promises are made to the prayer of faith, and what wonders it hath wrought in the world; the scripture is so full of this, that I think I need not trouble you with references. Now Sirs! this is something of that the Back-slider is like to get by departing from God; he looses his *love*, and therein his *favour*, his *care*, his *peace*, his *way*, his *spirit*, both the quicknings and comforts of it, his *people* their communion, their counsels, their examples, their consolations, their prayers. *Pray not thou for this people.* 'Tis true, they may pray for them, though they cannot pray with them: but such prayers are wont to return into their own bosoms.

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I might have answer'd some of those atheistical cavils, that the prophane spirits of a wanton back-sliding age may conceive against all this; but I shall at present onely reply the answer of *Michael* to the devil, *the Lord rebuke them.*

9. ver. 9.

2. 2. As he back-slides from God, in general; so particularly, from *Christ*, and that in these two respects.

1. 1. From *union*. It is certain, that he that finally back-slides from him, was never really united to him, but by his discovered apostasy, he actually confutes his high pretensions of *union* and looses what he once *seemed to have*. But if it be onely a gradual or temporary apostasy, he looses the present sence and evidence, yea, many times a great measure of the influences of this *union*. The least degree of apostasy is one blow in order to the lopping of the branch from the stock; though through the free grace of God in Christ, these wounds be healed in all his elect. The very nature of apostasy stands in direct opposition to this spiritual *union*; as the terms plainly insinuate. Every true believer is one integral and mystical part of the same body, whereof Christ is the head; but the Back-slider (that is, finally such, or as opposed to true believer) belonging not integrally, but onely accidentally, or as an excrement to the body, falls off, and is cast out by it.

2. From

2. From *Communion*, especially in four respects.

1. He communicates with Christ in none of his *graces*, though he abide on him by external profession, yet he receives no life from him; he hangs as a wither'd branch on a fruitful vine, abides on him, not in him; and be-<sup>Joh. 15. 6.</sup> fore the pruning time will come when every such branch shall be taken away; all his gifts, vertues and accomplishments are but dead and dry things, counterfeit Diamonds, *bay and stubble*, the old rotten leaves, which he had, it may be for many years ago, which *that day*<sup>1 Cor. 3. 13.</sup> shall declare, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every mans work of what sort it is. Then shall these dry leaves be set on fire, and the Back-slider must suffer the loss of them. *From him that hath not shall be taken*<sup>Mat. 23. 19.</sup> *away even that which he hath*: Now, Sirs! suppose this should be your case at last, how heavy will the loss sit? how deep will it sink you? how miserable will it leave you? when your supposed faith shall be found to be but damnable presumption; your humility, but a lowly and affected gesture of Phariseical pride; your charity, but the vain glorious ostentation of a compassionate nature; your zeal, but the strange fire of a carnal passion, and your hope, but a fools paradise, which will all burn like chaff, and vanish like smoke, when that discriminating fire shall seize on it.

Joh. 1. 9.  
1 Cor. 1. 30.

Math. 6. 31.  
Phil. 4. 6.

Joh. 15. 15.

2. He communicates with Christ in none of his *counsels*. Christ is the head of his church; and therefore her eyes are plac'd in him; he is that *Light that enlightheth every one that cometh into the world; who of God is made unto us wisdom*. The steerage of all lies on his hands, and the government on his shoulders; he takes the care of all; therefore *μη μεριμνηετε, take no thought, and be careful for nothing*; commit these cares to your head, who is wise enough to dispose of them with honour and ease. On this account the believer leads the merriest life of any one in the world, or may, if it be not his own fault; all his cares are manag'd for him, and he stands like a man unconcern'd in the thickest crowd of them. This makes the world so to gaze on him for a strange kind of sullen Stoical block, that hath ostraciz'd his reason, and abandon'd his very sense, because, forsooth he scorns to raunt, and rave, and play the *Bedlam*, like a man undone both in his wealth and in his wits at once, for every bawble that children and fools are so taken with. He knows what he hath in heaven, and therefore counts it beneath him to espouse his heart to those dirty clods of the earth. Others may think they know as much of heaven, and have as great a right there as he; but alas they are mistaken; none know so much of, nor have such a share in the heart of Christ; as his *friends*. He can hide nothing from



from his friends, but tells them all, all that's necessary for them to know; what ever straits they are in, they have their infallible oracle to consult; *Neither know we what to do; but our eyes are upon thee;* here is our refuge, both for direction and protection, *I will instruct thee, and teach thee in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye.* But all this aggravates the Back-sliders loss; Christ speaks to him in parables. *It is given unto you to know all mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given, Matth. 13. 11.* The preaching of the cros is to them that perish foolishness, *1 Cor. 1. 18.* unto the apostate *Jews* a stumbling block, and unto the *Greeks* foolishness; but unto them that are called both *Jews* and *Greeks* Christ, the power of God, and the wisdom of God, *ver. 23.* The Back-slider hath none to ask counsel off: but the world, the flesh, and the devil, be his distresses never so sad; God is departed from him, and answereth him no more; he is like a vessel in a storm, that hath lost both pilot and rudder, and must lie at the mercy of wind and rocks: hence it is that *the sorrow of the world worketh death, madness and despair.* *2 Chron. 20. 12.*  
*Psal. 32. 8.*  
*1 Sam. 28. 25.*  
*2 Cor. 7. 26.*

I might add here, that he looses not onely his eyes, but all his other senses. His *tast*, he cannot relish the sweetness of the gospel; though the dinner be prepared, the oxen and the fatlings killed, and all things ready, yet his

stomach is not ready; he hath a *price* in his  
*Prov. 17. 16.* hand, but a *fools heart* in his breast: *Our soul*  
*Num. 21. 5.* *loatheth this light bread*; it turns and urges a-  
 gainst it, it will not down, and no wonder, 'tis  
 contrary to their very nature. What's the go-  
 spel to one that lives by sence? 'tis out of his  
 way to that which he hath propos'd and re-  
 solves to prosecute at his end; give him a trade  
 to live on and grow rich by; give him plenti-  
 ful years, and full store-houses, his oxen, and  
 farnes, and wines, and lusts, and onely so  
 much honesty, or so much subtilty, or rather  
 so much dignity, as will secure him from the  
 penal part of mens laws, and then, as for the  
 matters of religion, let those care for that are  
 better at leisure; this is the priests work, let  
 him look to it; his *task* is gone; yea, and his  
*smelling* too; he can't say with the spouse,  
*Cant. 1. 13, 14.* *A bundle of myrrhe is my be-*  
*loved to me, as a cluster of camphire in the vine-*  
*yards of Engedy.* If an harlot intice him with  
*Prov. 7. 17,* the artificial *perfumes* of her fornication, he  
 presently resents it, and is rapt into a kind of  
 Paradise, with the conceit of it; Ah how fra-  
 grant are the blushing roses in the lap of a  
 newborn spring; what varieties of innate  
 sweets doth every spangled field feast his  
 sence with! these are the onely odours, that  
 affect his dull *emunctories*, his *vines give a good*  
*smell*, his silver and gold, though rak'd out of  
 the most stinking excrements, yet, oh how cor-  
 dial

dial is its scent ! but though the boxes of God's spicknard be broken before his eyes, though all the rarities of the gospel be presented him, which are *sweet smelling savour unto God*, Eph. 5. 2. yet he perceives nothing at all in it, of whom we may say, as *David* says of the idols, *noſes have they, but they ſmell not.* Pſal. 115. 6. The ſpouſe was once taken in a fit of this ſpiritual poze *Cant. 5. 5.* ſhe had loſt her ſmelling, till ſhe aroſe and opened to her beloved, then ſhe quickly ſmelt whoſe hand had been on the lock. Nay, he hath loſt *feeling* too; in the gentils caſe, *who being paſt feeling have given themſelves up to* Eph. 4. 19. *laſciviousneſs.* Though they lay up ſin as the duſt, and treaſure up iniquity on themſelves as the ſtones of the brook, enough to ſink a thouſand worlds into hell, yet they don't feel it, though God hew them by the prophets, and ſlay them by the words of his mouth; though he ſheath the ſword of his word in their very bowels; yet they won't feel it; though the poiſonous thornes of temptations goar the very arteries of their ſouls, and thoſe hideous locuſts of the bottomleſs pit ſtrike their fatal ſtings through their dying hearts; yet (as if they were charm'd into ſtocks or ſtones) they can't be ſenſible. Laſtly he hath loſt his *hearing* too; is grown deaf; *To whom ſhall I ſpeak and give warning that they may hear? their ear is uncircumciſed and they cannot hearken,* *Jer. 6. 10.* Let me ſay what I will, they reſolve not to hear; they

are like the deaf adder *that stoppeth her ears* ; which will not hearken to the voice of the charmers charming never so wisely, never so faithfully, never so seasonably, never so compassionately. The devil can charm them, false teachers can bewitch them, the world can allure them, they will dounce after these pipes; but let God say or do what he will, they will not be charm'd by him, they cannot, that is, they will not hear.

3. He communiates with Christ in none of his *merits*. What ever Christ hath purchased for the saints *in via or in patria, in hand, or in hope*; the Back-slider hath nothing to do with it. *If ye continue in my word, then are ye my disciples indeed, Joh. 8. 31.* all the riches of a Saviour, and priviledges of a disciple are yours; but if ye continue not, you loose all; what ever I have purchas'd by my obedience, or sufferings is nothing to you; I can't say 'tis all one as if there were no Saviour, for 'twere well for him that dies in his apostasy, if there had never been a Saviour; 'tis true, Christ hath purchased an *unction from the holy one*, whereby he hath consecrated some to be *Kings and Priests* unto God; but the Back-slider is never like to be the richer, or the holier for it. Christ hath merited for his people all the blessings, liberties and prerogatives of the covenant of grace, and irreversibly confirm'd it on them; in him they have boldness, and access with confidence to the throne of grace. In him they are adopted, just-

justified, sanctified, saved; in him the law is fully satisfied, and the hand-writing of ordinances cancelled; every providence is directed in mercy; every rod dipped in honey, and the water of adversity is made a cup of blessing. In him God is become their God; their own by a more proper and peculiar right than any thing else in the world; and all that is in God is faithfully made over to them for good; his omnipotence for their protector, his omnipresence for their overseer, his wisdom for their counsellor, his justice for their avenger, his al sufficiency for their treasury, his holiness for their ward-robe, his faithfulness and unchangeableness for their security, and his eternity for the date of their inheritance; with him he hath freely given them all things, both the *upper and the nether springs*; life and death, grace and glory, this world and your world to ~~come~~ are theirs. But what's all this to the Back-sliders? The prodigal hath all that he is like to have in his hand, in his purse, in his barns, in his stock, in his shops, in his fields or on his back, he hath nothing layd up in Christ, where the believers treasure, life and all lies; he hath a little (and it may be that little is too much) of unrighteous *mam-mons* unprofitable, dirty lumber; a little water in a stinking and leaking cistern, and when this is spent all is spent; spoyl him of this and the man is undone, and made as miserable as misery



it self can make him, he hath never a mite in heavens *bank*, out of the reach of moth and rust and thief; nor hath Christ layd up ought for him, but his wrath and curse.

4. He communicates with Christ in none of his *victories*. Christ hath led captivity captive, hath sign'd and seal'd a full release from the house of bondage, he hath paid the ransom and purchas'd a glorious liberty, *sin shall not* have dominion over them, hath subdued their iniquities; he hath broken the strong barrs of death, and vanquish't the power of the grave, and swallowed up death in victory; not onely the first, but the second death, the devouring flames of *Tophet* shall never singe one of their hairs, nor the smell of that fire and brimstone once pass upon them. But the Back-slider (that is, as such) hath no lot nor portion in all this. Christ strikes never a blow for but against him; 'tis he that perseveres shall wear the crown, his enemies are trod down before him, the battel is fought for him, Satan himself is bruise'd under his feet, he is created conquerour, yea, more than conquerour; the lawrel is put into his hand, with which he shall break through the hosts of death, and triumph in glory. But the Back-slider hath nothing to do here, unless it be *Passively*, for this indeed is one of those enemies, whose spoyles shall be divided in that day of recompense. What! shall Christ fight for his enemies?

*Rom. 6. 17.*

18.

*Chap. 3. 21.*

*Chap. 6. 14.*

*Mich. 7. 19.*

*1 Cor. 15. 54.*

*Rev. 2. 10.*

*Rom. 16. 20.*

*Chap. 8. 37.*

*Math. 25.*

28.

mies? no he will never be false to his own cause, let them look to it, and make good their ground as well as they can, if the devil their captain can't defend them, if their refuges of lies will not shelter them, they must look to fall before him, and sacrifice their souls to his unconquerable sword. 'Tis true, God doth sometimes lay a check and a restraint on the Back-sliders madness, partly for his own, & partly for his peoples sake that he shall not open his mouth, or lift up his hand as else he might do; but it redounds little to his advantage, as he is like to find, when God shall judge of the secrets of his heart and conscience shall find and implead him guilty of that, which he never durst to commit, though there be this bridle in his teeth it doth but curb him, it doth not turn him; how desperately soever he falls there's none of the fathers hand to help him up, unless it be a child that falls: nay, though he may seem to rise, as to particular acts, by the strength of common grace, which (it may be) he hath not yet utterly sinn'd away, yet it is but in order to a more fatal cast. Therefore the Back-slider is call'd a *slave* Jer. 2. 14. *Is Israel a servant: is he a homeborn slave? why is he spoyled?* might not the priviledge of the house in which he was born have exempted him from the sons of violence? what! one of my servants? one born in my house, and brooded under my wing, and yet spoyled? how came

came this to pass? Who durst have assaulted my doors? or scal'd my walls? or if they had, could not I have protected him? yea, was I less than in gag'd to do it by my covenant? how is it then that he is thus spoyled? The precedent verse gives the very reason; *they have forsaken me.* My service (it seems) was not good enough for them; they must needs try other masters; they were weary of the fountain, and have gotten them cisternes of their own, and now see what's become of them; they were my slaves indeed and therein my freemen, yea, they were as my children, they wanted for nothing, I was God al sufficient to them, their shield and buckler, my wing was their protection, and my name their strong tower; but now every one enslaves them, and prey's on them at their pleasure, and this is that they have gotten; every one is grown too hard for them, every temptation ensnares them, every suggestion of the flesh, every frown of the world commands them; they pretend now and then to beg assistance from God; but none comes, they seek him early, but 'tis their corn and wine and oil they lack, their peace, their trade, their liberty, their masters table & wages, but not his service, they are as averse from this as ever 'tis onely the flesh keeps all this ado, give them but the bones they whine for, and they will be quiet enough. But let such a people know, that God hath little need of such servants, nor can they

in

in reason expect, that he should ever open his door to them again, but on severer termes than at first they were admitted.

3. He back-slides from his *own mercies*; 3. which (were it not for himself) might have been his own for ever. *Those that observe lying* Hos. 13. 9. *vanities forsake their own mercies.* *Jon. 2. 8.* they are the immediate instruments of their destruction. They rob themselves

1. *Of what they have in hand.* There's no- 1. thing they enjoy that they can truly call their own, they have forfeited their title to the very cloathes they wear, and the meat they eat. 'Tis true, they have a civil, but no sanctified or covenant right. The whole world, with all its fulness, riches, and proprieties is the Lord Christs that great *Manour*, whereof he is *Lord Paramount* and all its inhabitants are Psal. 24. 1. either *tenants* to or *intruders* on him; our first *graunt* was utterly broken and lost in *Adam*, almost as soon as made; wherefore those that have not renewed their *estate* by faith in Christ (which is also the undeserved priviledge of free grace) and hold *in capite* under and from him, are none of his covenant *tenants*; nor will their bare profession of faith justify their broken title unto the temporal any more than to the eternal profession. Besides, *Apostasy* is high treason against the great King of heaven and earth, but treason forfeits the traitours inheritance into the hands of his Prince, how  
firm

firm soever his title were before ; and this forfeiture God doth sometimes take in the things themselves ; or if he spare them here, be sure he meets with them in a more spiritual manner, what they have, they have with a vengeance, the curse and the snare is in it, their talents are talents of lead not to enrich, but to sink them the deeper.

2. *Of what they hope for*, eternal mercies; they undo themselves bodies and souls. Alas ! how many confident builders are there in the world, that raise the egregious models of their conceited happiness on the peremptory hopes of the life to come ? all their crosses, losses, paines, disgraces and fears they make no doubt will one day be exchange'd for an estate of perfect rest and peace, they would be ready to spit in the faces of those, that should but question it, and yet they are still revolting more and more, both in heart and life. Ah sinner ! 'twill shortly be tryed, what will become of thy confidence, when once the glimmering blaze of these crackling thornes is out, and thy lusty hopes shall be as the giving up of the ghost, thou wilt better understand what thou art now a doing.

Thus you have heard *ἐν ὀλίγῳ* a little imperfectly, the *terminus à quo*, or what it is the Backslider is back-sliding from, both in respect of duty and priviledge. We shall next examine the *terminus ad quem*, or what it is he back-slides



slides to. And would not any one conclude it must needs be some real and matchless good, that he hath in his eye, and on good security too? that he should wittingly run such a risk, and make so desperate an adventure for? we will therefore consider

1. The Back-sliders master, or rather masters. I.

2. His work. 2.

3. His wages. 3.

1. His masters are the *devil*, the *flesh* and the *world*, the least of which is no less than a legion; and is not this exchange like to make well for the Back-slider? one gracious Prince for a thousand bloody and perfidious tyrants; one almighty, alwise and tender-hearted father for whole legions of cursed fiends; doth not this look like the way to some incomparable happiness? Let us consider a little their quality and their carriage, and I think 'twill easily appear that they are

1. The most *dishonourable masters*. 'Twas I. one of *Jeremie's* lamentations, *servants have ruled over us*, and 'twas *Canaan's* curse, *a servant of servants shall be unto his brethren*. Lam. 5. 8. Gen. 9. 25. But of all lamentable and cursed slaves in the world, there is none like the Back-slider, who is one, that once had the best master that heaven or earth could afford him; what ever is requisite to the constitution or perfection of a good master is eminently and essentially found in

in him; yet all this, it seems, can't please the Back-slider; though he might have been, yea, once profest himself to be the servant of this heavenly master in all faithfulness, humility and readiness; yet now away he goes and indents with the world, the flesh and the devil, even he that was bred up in, or once admitted into this royal family now creeps to these slaves, and begs service of these condemned rebels. Oh the madness! oh the misery of this unparallel'd folly! what's the honour and pomp and glory you boast off, and thus thirst after? a little praise of men, the flattering applauses of a few beggarly mortals, or a moments title to or dominion among these sordid cottages of the earth? and what doth all this amount to? lay it in the ballance a little. *I have said ye are Gods*, this were something indeed, would the scales stand at that point. *But ye shall dy like men, and fall like one of the Princes.* *Psal. 28. 6, 7.* Here their glory and their multitude, their train and their pomp I shall descend; yea, *the light of the wicked shall be put out, and the sparke of his fire shall not shine; the light shall be dark in his tabernacle, and his candle shall be put out with him.* *Job. 18. 5, 6.* Oh! what vassals so base, so worthless, so contemptible, as those wretched souls that are the sworn votaries to this cursed trinity, the world, the flesh and the devil? Well might *Salomon* say, *the heart of the wicked is little*

*little worth.* Pro. 10, 20. if there be any worth in a man, it lies in his heart; this is the kernel, if this be worth nothing, what's the shell worth? Ah! sinner! is it thy honour thou standest so much upon? thy credit? thy reputation thy birth or abilities? are these the things thou art so tender of? and is this the way to raise the rate of them? to degrade thy self from a free-man to the veriest slave upon earth? from a crown and a robe and an inexhaustible al sufficiency, to a rotten stinking rag, that will not so much as cover thy shame, nor protect thy skin? from the court of heaven to a dunghil, to a dungeon? from the bench to the bar? from an inheritance of grace and glory, to an inheritance of shame and folly? is this the honour thy ambition soars so high for? is this the promotion that's like to make such a man of thee? where shall we find words to express half thy madness? See what a master thou hast pickt out, *Jud. 6.* That old *Fayl-bird*, that is reserv'd in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgement of the great day. This is thy Prince, whose dominions reach from one end of hell to the other, whose galm is that infernal vault, whose throne is the sulphureous pile of flaming Tophet, and whose subjects are as free, as noble as happy, as sin and misery in the height of it are like to render them to all eternity. And this is this father whose children are dogs, *Joh. 8. 44.*

Rev. 22. 15. *vipers*. Matth. 3. 7. *swine* Matth. 7. 6. *fools*. Eph. 3. 15. an honourable race. But what! this is an idle phanatick bug-bear; we hope we are as far from such a relation, as those that do accuse us; once, we know what the world is, our eyes and senses cannot deceive us, if we can get in with this, we have enough. Indeed *Esau* once told his brother in a complement that he had enough, and yet his birthright lost. Gen. 33. 9. So had the rich glutton, *Luke* 16. enough and more than enough; but what's the next news you hear of him? *In hell he lift up his eyes being in torment*. What's become of his purple and fine linnen and sumptuous table now? death gives him but one poor thrust, and all vanish' in a moment, as if it had never been; he that even now was plunging his soul in the pure blood of the grape, that might have commanded what he list, and drink his wine in bowles, is not now worth one drop of water, he begs, but must go without it, and this is *Mammon*, thine idol, that treasure thou preferrest before heaven it self; even another such honour and happiness as was *Job's* pot of heard, whilst thou canst wake it hold together in thy hand; it serves to scrape the filthy bolches of thine ulcerated mind; but if it chance to fall it breaks in shivers. *Sic transi gloria mundi*. But the *flesh* is thy near kinsman, here, it may be, thou hopest for better entertainment. Thy  
brave

brave spirit scorns to enslave it self in the world, that's too foul, too mean, ~~toyle~~ toyleſom a life, thou wilt make much of thy ſelf, and be no one's ſervant, but thine own. *Homo ſui arbitrii.* And what is this *fleſh*, of whoſe alliance thou ſo beaſteſt. So *Rom.* 8. 18. *By the offence of one judgement came upon all men unto condemnation;* and chap. 8. 13. *If ye live after the fleſh ye ſhall die;* and *Iſa.* 40. 6, 7. *All fleſh is graſs.* Graſs that muſt ſhortly be mown down, the judgement it paſt on it, it is condemned and muſt dy, dy not onely a natural but a penal death, under the ſentence of a ſanguinary law, now what on honour is this, that thy Lord and maſter, yea, the top and crown of thy kindred, from whom all thy expectations are, muſt ſhortly be hanged, or executed as a traitour, or thief? Nay, while thou haſt thy deſired liberty, to ſport it out in the houſe of thy friend (as ſome mad fellows can carowe it in their ſayles between the ſentence and the gallows) is it not an honour indeed to make a beaſt or a beggar of thy ſelf, &c it may be both? to deſtroy thy reaſon, to ruin thy body, &c to ſink thy poſterity? This is ſome of that honourable exchange the Back-slider is wont to make when he departs from God.

2. They are the moſt *tyrannical maſters.* They have neither good credit, nor good nature, 'tis their pride and paſtime to inſult and torment; never was poor ſlave under har-



He is in bondage, than the Back-slider is: for he  
 is that hath seem'd to be wanting from his  
 work a while (though he did but seem) there-  
 fore now that he is return'd to his old master,  
 under whose roof he was by nature born, he is  
 plyed the closer with whip & spur, that he  
 may fetch up what is behind; hence it is that  
 ordinarily none are so furiously diligent in the  
 devils work, as apostates are, as if they were af-  
 fraid lest through their negligence or intermis-  
 sion, they should come short of damnation. 'Tis  
 the lash drives them, and they know it not. Be-  
 sides, they are masters that allow their servant  
 no rest, no respite; *The wicked are like the troubled  
 sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire  
 and dirt. Isa. 57. 20.* besides its natural motion,  
 there is a storm upon it, that tosses and troubles  
 it. *Raging waves -- foaming out their own sha-  
 me. Jud. 13.* they are posselt with that spirit, that  
 worketh in the children of disobedience; there  
 is no peace in them, it is as fire in their bones;  
 that they cannot rest. *They devise mischief on  
 their beds; they can't eat in quiet, nor sleep  
 in quiet, they are haunted up and down where  
 ever they go, plodding, consulting, conspiring  
 how to promote their masters work. When  
 ever they stumble, for fashion's sake, into the  
 exercise of any religious duty, as hearing,  
 praying, reading or the like, these are the  
 thoughts and ends that dog them through, and  
 pursue them like avengers of blood, that they  
 can't*

Eph. 22.

Eph. 36.4.

can't turn aside, nor seriously fix themselves on any thing, that shall obstruct these tyrants interests; they may salute religion as they pass, but that's all, there's no argument will persuade them to sit down and embrace it. If convictions do sometimes begin to fasten, and the griping fears of eternal wrath seize on them, away they run to Physicians, it may be to witches, to cure the melancholy conceit. Oh! what tossings and toylings, what lying, colloquing, equivocating? what broyles and violence, what jealousies, revenges and tumults are there among those, that vie in the service of the world, the flesh or the devil? Oh! the barbarous cruelty they exercise both on body and soul! envy, malice, pride, discontent, lust, carnal cares and fears, like so many infernal *Harpies* are alway gnawing on their very vitals, and sucking the marrow out of their guilty bones; some walk up and down like ghosts, half starv'd in the midst of their sufficiency, for want of what they do abound with; the world hangs so dead at their heels, and yet the good sticks so deep in their sides, that they even tug out their hearts, and draw themselves blind to get on, they will be rich, they will be reveng'd, they will do what they will do, how dear soever it cost them. Others are so overcharg'd by their Epicurean taskmasters, that they are ready to burst insunder; their bodies, wits and estates are on the rack;

is't not a task and a burden, that nature it self groans under, to pour down whole gallons of strong liquours at a sitting? Is't not a task and a torment to burn that silver cord in the fire of lust, *that consumeth to destruction?* to extort and waste the choicest sap and strength of nature in a shameful course of uncleanness? Is't not a task and a curse too to rise early and sit up late and eat the bread of carefulness, to cark and moyl with that slavish labour and earnest thought, as if this were an indisputable fundamental of faith, *Miss of riches, and undone for ever?* I might instance in several others of the same spirit, of whom we may say, as the poor man of his son *Matth. 17. 15.* *Lord have mercy upon them, for they are lunatick and sore vexed;* and no wonder, for if no man can serve two masters, 'tis enough to make the Back-slider mad to serve three such as he hath chosen, who, though they agree in one general issue, yet are of very different dispositions. When *lust* spurres the mind one way, and the *world* commands it another, and the *devil* drives it a third, in what amaze and distress is the poor wretch snared? vain would he please the *flesh* in its pride, ease, luxurie, revenge or the like; but the *world* hath something else to do for him; either it denies him wherewith to serve his *lust*, or else will not suffer him (though on as base principles as the other) to employ it that way; hence arise those

those intestine wars, and secret fightings, those implacable discontents and furious passions, whereon the *devil* taking his desired advantage, drives him on some mischievous designs, and attempts of villanous impiety, or, it may be, perswades him at last (having tir'd him in these nets) to go hang himself out of the present misery. Oh! that men were wise! that they understood what tyrants they devote themselves to, when once they forsake God! how cruel! how merciless both to body and soul! Remember he that back-slides from God, back-slides to the devil, as well as to the world or the flesh. Methink this should startle them; are they willing to be chain'd up with devils? is his society better than the communion of saints? or fellowship of the holy spirit? or the beatifical vision and fruition of God? Are they not ready to curse the witch as one that is unworthy to live, who hath formally and explicitly, though secretly, subscrib'd to a covenant with Satan? who then shall curse them, who have implicitly and virtually done the same thing? Ah Sirs! dare you say with those, *Isa. 28, 15. We have made a covenant with death, and with hell we are at agreement*? what! at an agreement with hell? shall that Prince of darkness, with his conclave of hellish fiends, be your Lords, your guardians and fathers? shall these command and protect you? command you indeed they may, but they will badly protect you, when

*Jan. 4. 12.  
σαοι ας δ  
αυτ  
φυχη.  
Arist. Esq*

God doth once arise to dissanull the covenant, and dissolve the agreement, and with the *hail-stones* of his wrath sweep away the *refuge of lies*.

2. 2. Let's also consider a little what the Back-sliders work is; be sure, as is the master, such is his service; a hard master hath hard work, a base and ignoble master hath no honourable imployment, for his slaves. Harken then, ô thou that art weary, ashamed or afraid of the service of God, that wilt have a new master, though thou go to hell for one; let me tell thee a little what thy work will be, that, if it be not too late, thou mayst bethink thyself.

I. 1. Thou shalt be set to *unravel and undo all that ever thou hast done for God, or thy own soul*. This will be thy first work now, to repent of thy repentance, not of the infirmities and imperfections of it, as the best have cause to do, but of the thing it self; to repent that ever thou didst pretend to repent of sin, this may seem somewhat harsh and strange, but whether it be formally or virtually done, it comes all to one in it self, & in Gods account. Thou must now harden that heart again, that in any measure begun to be softned, and blind those eyes, that once begun to open, and fear that conscience, that was a little awakened, & cool and carnalize those affections, that with so much ado, the promises and threatnings of the word, and the various dispensations of

Pro-



providence had rub'd a little heat into, and shake off the very cords of duty and obedience towards God, and break the sacred bonds of thy plighted love and loyalty, at least as to the spirituality and power of it, and play the bloody *Herod* in the *Bethlehem* of thy soul, and martyr those blessed infants of conviction, that were lately born there. Thou must ingage a war with the holy spirit of grace, and oppose the kingdom and interest of Christ, both in thy own heart and in the world; in a word, thy work will be to dishonour God, and to damn thy own soul. And now Sirs! what say you? Are you willing to ingage in such service? would you fain be doing of this work? Is this it you can prize as your meat and drink? would you indeed that you were greater strangers and enemies to God? that you were able to do him a mischief? that your heart were more bent against him? that you were once beyond the reach of all his calls, and were seal'd up in a final impenitency? why sinner if this be not thy mind, what hast thou to do here? whatever thou imaginest, this is the trade thy back-sliding heart is driving; whatever thy hopes, whatever thy promises, whatever thy pretences be, this is that thou art about, and virtually covenanting to do and be, as far as thou art a Back-slider.

2. Another part of thy work will be 2.

Ελασ-  
Φημι-  
ἴσθεται.

to blaspheme the good ways of God, directly or indirectly. Many shall follow their pernicious ways by reason of whom the way of truth shall be evil spoken of. 2 Pet. 2. 2. This is spoken of those false teachers and their proselytes, mention'd in the precedent ver. whose description agrees with that of *Jud. ver. 4.* Certain men crept in unawares -- denying (whether in word or deed or both) the only Lord God and our Lord Jesus Christ; whom St. John calls Antichrist, such as went out from us, but were not of us, therefore apostates, denying both the father and the son, and therefore blasphemers. 1 *Job. 2.* from 18. to 23. St Paul calls it the mystery of iniquity. 2 *Thes. 2. 7.* whom he there describes from 3 to 12 ver. and tells us that even then it did begin to work; the Embryo and first principles of it were then infus'd and form'd in those false teachers, that were crept in among them, which afterward grew into that grand apostasy of the church of Rome, that common sink whereinto all other heresies, blasphemies and unscriptural opinions, practices and parties do empty themselves, like so many smaller rivulets, into the immense Gulf; for what is Antichristianism, but *corpus aggregatum*, a gallimansry, or complication of all those heresies, schisms and damnable doctrines and practices, that any way oppugne the truths or interest of the gospel, as Rome it self was of nations

nations and languages in its first political constitution? So then, all kinds and degrees of apostasy, but especially that which more directly symbolizeth with, or participates of the Antichristian apostasy, is a blaspheming of the way of truth. Is it not a reproach to the master, when his servant shall wilfully run from him, and chuse rather, to serve the vilest tyrant upon earth, nay, and it may be, with some pretenses of reason or religion? will you not call this blasphemy, to proclaim to the world that God is worse than the devil? that Christ is a harder master than Mammon? that the most slavish drudgery in the world is far more desirable, than the so much extolled service of God? and to affirm this on experience too? with what more malicious contempt can creatures spit in the face of their maker? And is not this the real language, more or less, of all Back-sliders? I doubt not but you would aggravate the matter in as heinous a manner as this, should but a poor servant of yours so deal with you, though there be no comparison between either the persons, or the causes. Nay there are not a few, that, like the beast St *John* speakes of, are not afraid to open their very mouthes in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle; and that dwell in the heaven of his church, though not immediately so named, yet under their false representations, and im-

μεριον  
κόκκινον  
γέμον  
όνομά-  
των  
ελασ-  
φημίας.  
Rev. 17.3.

Rev. 13.6.

puta-

Jer. 6. 10.

Prov. 1. 22.

putations of sedition, schism, heresy, hypocrisy or the like. But how ever it be, every act of the Back slider, as such, reflects most deeply on the honour of God. *Behold, the word of the Lord is unto them a reproach*, that is, the matter and occasion of their reproaches. And now Sirs! what think ye? is it your honour indeed to live to the shame of religion? and the reproach of your once admired profession? Will you spend the residue of your days in blaspheming God? will you be numbered among those scorers that delight in scorning? will you begin the work of hell upon earth, as if you long'd to be there? Is cursing and banning and howling and gnawing of teeth such musick with you? if so, doubt not you shall shortly have enough on't.

3. Thy work must be *to advance the devil's kingdom in opposition to Christ's. Thy Kingdom come*, may be thy complement; but that Satans may come, must be thy employment. And here every thing within thee, and every thing about thee must serve in its place and measure, to promote this design. Thy *constitution*, be it what it will, must do its part in the same work. Art thou of a sanguine, cheerful temperament? this will do notably, to explode the power of Godliness, to blow up religion into the air of youthful vanity, flashes of inconstancy, selfish ostentation, or meer notion and speculation; none like this

to make a religious weather-cock; here's a pleasant, merry, sociable and taking disposition; no such companion in the world as this, a choice bird for a *decoy* to entice others into the nets. Art thou of a duller, phlegmatick, obtruse complexion; though this be good for but little of it self; yet, if the spurres be the sharper, it will go through with work; let it but be plyed well with the whip of temptation, and it will make a lusty drudge in the devils teem; feed it well, or promise it fair with the vanities of the world, or the lusts of the flesh, and it will fancy no other happinels but this; 'tis an easy matter to pick out such an ones eyes, and then he is fit for the imposition of the foulest burdens. If Satan hath any piece of apish pride, or treacherous falshood on the wheel, here's one that makes it his very element to be exercis'd in it. Art thou of an angry, tender, cholerick temper, this with a little instruction, will soon commence master in the devils *fire-works*; it will serve for *granados* of wonderful execution, in the storm of persecution; do but shift it into a form of religion, & none in the world is like to be so successful in multiplying divisions, and fomenting of parties to the deep hazzard of the gospels interest. In any desperate expedition, this furious, Gallick spirit will lead the forlorn hope and make the first assault; this is that combustible matter, that's easily set on fire of hell, and being once lighted, like *Sampson's* foxes, is wont



to make sad work in the corn-fields of the church of God; and at last like a drivelling taper, burns down into the socket of hell, where it smothers and stink's to all eternity. Or art thou of a *Saturnine*, sullen melancholy constitution? this will make an active pioneer, to dig in the treacherous *mines* of *Jesuitical* counsels, combinations or attempts: 'tis a slow, crooked, curl'd piece, but so much the fitter for the devils purpose. And as thy constitution, so thy parts, natural and acquired; thy fortunes, thy alliances, thy calling must all serve in the same work. If thou art a man of parts, then, for thy encouragement and firmer ingagement, thou mayst be intrusted as a captain and leader to train a band in the gates of hell, for the service of the Dragon and his cause, though (it may be) with *Michael's* colours, and under the displayed banner of purity and power of godliness. If thou hast a potent purse, or fair estate, every lust that flatters thy humour, shall be admitted pensioner to it; or else it must be lock'd up from thy own back and belly, and those to whom it is due, to pamper the pride and luxury of the next generation; and as for Religion both matter and mode, must be by this determined, both with thy self, and (which Satan takes as a special service) with most of thy neighbours and clients too. Whatever thy relations be, thy example, instigations and influence must

must be improv'd to bewitch and insnare them. Whatever thy calling be, the sin of it must be thy trade, nor so much respect be had to the credit of the gospel, as to the increase of gain. This is some of that work the Back-sliders masters have for them, and is there any such temptation here, that men in their right wits should so greedily seek and sue for?

4. Lastly, in a word, your work will be *to damn your selves and others*. Every step backward is one step toward perdition. *Heb. 10. ult.* 'Tis undoing work: the striking of a neighbour secretly; the spreading of a snare before the feet of a brother, and the laying a gin for his soul.

3. We shall next consider, *what wages* these servants are to expect  
from the world,  
from the flesh,  
from Satan,  
from God.

1. *From the world*. Your own experience, methink, should be sufficient to inform you, what a generous master this is; but a little more distinctly.

1. *All that the world hath for you is in this life*; make the best on't, it will reach no further, and how miserable a case is this? when a person is stretch't out on his death-bed, and begins to entertain some serious thoughts of himself, and of that eternity he is just entring upon;

**I.**  
*Non semper  
sequitur. con-  
ventem, mo-  
rientem nun-  
quam.*

upon; when his soul sits trembling on his dying lips, and knows not whither to take her next flight; but in the deep straight of fear and fury thus laments her self. Thus long have I serv'd the world; a faithful and painful drudge have I been to this hard master; for whose sake I have displeas'd God, wounded conscience, and undone my self; and now that I am come to dy, where is that I have all this while serv'd, and swear, and cared for? Oh wretched, deceitful world! O ye, lying accursed vanities! have I board'd my ear, and observ'd my vow'd obedience to you all the days of my weary and unhappy life hitherto, for a little meat and drink and cloathes? is all my wages spent in your work? never a penny to carry home with me? have ye nothing to send with me into another world, but my sin and guilt and shame? must I be your *young serving-man* here, and an *old beggar* to all eternity? must all my pleasures, my friends, my ease, my honours, and at once, my heaven end here? oh! how swift hath my winged time been on this tottering stage! *The merry madness of one day*; which the short fingers of my finite thought can at one span reach from end to end! one wanton turn or two, and behold an *Exit*; one hour's laughter, as the strange *preludium* to an everlasting wailing and lamentation? O eternity! eternity! was ever poor wretch so undone? unexpectedly, universally, and irreparably undone! Why!

*Unius diei  
hilaris, infan-  
tie.*

Why! sure it must needs be some great and incomparable good, if a few hours or years bare enjoyment should be of greater value, than the crown of glory, or the escape from everlasting torments. Let us see then, whether the nature, use, or worth of these things be such, as rational creatures should prefer and chuse before all the joyes of heaven, therefore,

2. *Whatever this world hath to bestow on you, 2. concernes onely the body;* that part of you which was taken from, and must shortly return to the dust. Would you not pity that poor slave, that hath a most churlish, cruel master to please, and that in the hardest and basest work, that ever creatures were imploy'd in; and yet never a rag allowed him to cover his shame, onely an old dirty shoe on his foot, and this, ordinarily, either too big, or too straight, that it galls and wrings and burdens him, so as it were better he had none? why! this is the service the Back-slider chuses before any other in the world. It may be, he hath gotten a shoe on his foot, that part that's next the earth; he hath tugg'd hard and made narrow shifts for a little something to fill his belly, and to cloath his back, or to hoard up for his posterity; yet at best 'tis a shoe that will not defend him against the waters of affliction, sickness, accidents, or death, or the cutting stones of persecution, or the small gravel of a discontented mind, or a guilty conscience. Nay,

K

when

when all is done, it is but borrowed, it may be, stolen, for which he neither hath, nor ever can make any satisfaction, but must be arraigned at Gods bar, and rot in God's jail for it to all eternity. And is this such a desirable priviledge? yet if it were something to be valued, whereas it is rather to be dreaded on such terms; yet his nobler part is naked; his spiritual shame lies open to all that have but eyes to see; the soul hath never a mantle to cover it in, but is expos'd to all the storms of hell, and the scorching blasts of temptation. 'Tis true the flesh may be humour'd, though it be hard to satisfy it; the body may be pamper'd, though it be therewith poyson'd; but what's like to become of the soul? *Meats for*  
 1 Cor. 6. 13. *the belly, and the belly for meats, but God shall destroy both it and them.* These are things that must shortly perish; destruction is written upon them. Oh! the madness and blindness of those, whose eyes the God of this world hath blinded!

But these are melancholy *Phanatik* stories. What! are they naked, that cloath themselves with crimson, and deck themselves with ornaments of gold? no these are the onely gallants of the world; the onely wise, the onely thriving men, they are above the imputations of baseness or beggary.

But alas! as fair and fresh as thy flower blossoms now, there is a spoyling time coming.



coming. *When thou art spoiled, what wilt thou do?* this rotten shoe of creature, enjoyments, may possibly hang on thy foot while thou art acting thy part on the stage of the world, though that be more than I dare promise thee, but when once thou comest to wade through the grave, then it passes all cobbler's cure, and I shall hang no longer, but thou must go out of the world as naked as thou cam'st in.

3. *When the world hath done its utmost for you, it can't satisfy you*, either in your wants or desires. There will be a vacuum still, something lacking. *In the fulness of his sufficiency* *Job .20. 23* *he shall be in straits.* As for your spiritual, absolute, soul-wants, what must be supplied, or you are for ever undone; the world can do nothing for. Never a grain of grace to be extracted out of these minerals; no salvation to be digg'd out of the dirty furrows of the earth; the pearl of price lies not among these pebbles: no sinner thou may'st starve & dy and be damn'd too for any thing this empty bubble hath to help thee with. Nay, as to thy present outward wants, there's no self-sufficiency in the creature to help thee; thy food can't nourish thee, nor thy cloathes warm thee, nor thy bed ease thee, nor thy physick recover thee, if God do but deny the influence of his blessing. 'Tis not all the golden shields in the world, that can defend thy body, estate

or relations from the least dart of an angry providence, or thy mind from the least accusing, *item* of a self-tormenting conscience. Now Sirs! would you chuse such a master from whom you can't be supply'd with things absolutely necessary? one that will starve you? that hath neither food nor raiment? that cares not for you, neither in sickness, nor in health? Surely, this bespeakes a very strange kind and degree of madness. Don't you pity that poor apprentice, that's bound (it may be) by the parish, to drudge under so beggerly a brothel, or so curst a churle, that besides his cruel slavery, wants for what he should have, as ye use to say? but who hath bound you? is it not your own voluntary act, and obstinate choice? O! learn to pity yourselves then, who are in the far sadder case.

Besides, as it can't supply your wants, so neither can it satisfy your desires. I will appeal but to thine own experience, hath thine eye been ever satisfied with seeing, or thine ear filled with hearing? nay, *He that loveth silver shall not be satisfied with silver, nor he that loveth abundance, with increase. Eccles. 5. 10.* Thy hand may tire indeed, and grow weary with grasping and griping; the organs of sense may possibly surfeit on some particular objects, but the mind is still unsatiable, as the Poet says of *Alexander*, on whom providence

dence had cast the empire of the whole world.

*Estuat infelix angusto limite mundi.*

The world was too narrow, that he busses as it were for air and elbow-room; those that have but the world for their portion have *inexplebilem mentem*, never what they would have. The mind of man is fully and onely satisfied with the creature (says one) when it finds God and Christ together in it; God giving proportion and Christ giving propriety. But the Back-slider hath no right in God and Christ, and therefore hath onely the possession of a naked creature; not the fruition of the creature as good; for the creature is not good to any, but by vertue of that blessing, which is the fruit of the word of God and prayer; this onely makes it a satisfactory good. But Sirs! the world hath none of this blessing for you, to sanctify, proportion or appropriate it self. It is godliness that hath the promise, and therefore the blessing, as of the other, so of this life. Nay, there is a vanity in the world, and a vexation too; like thorns, in their gathering they prick, this is some of their vexation; and in their spending they crackle and vanish into smoak and ashes, this also is their vanity and the other part of their vexation. The world carries all her beauty in her face, so that in her approach she delights, but in

i Tim. 4. 4, 5.

fruition the troubles, and at parting torments; and are these the things that are like to give you satisfaction? *Hell and destruction are never full, so the eyes of man are never satisfied. Pro. 27. 20.* As if he had said, when hell is so stuff'd that it can hold no more; when destruction it self is grown weary, and death begins to make restitution to poor mortals, and sue for a *quietus est*; when the devil turns friend to mankind, and resolves to tempt and beguile no more; then may the world give full content, and satisfy the eyes and hearts of its fond admirers, and never till then.

*Ob.*

*Ob.* But you'll tell me, 'tis confess't, this is the greedy and unsatiable avarice of some few, though too many, that think they have never enough, unless they have all; that like the horse-leaches daughters, cry, *Give, Give*; but 'tis every one's duty to be fully content with his own condition; and as for our parts, we are satisfied with that measure that God hath bestowed, be it more or less; onely using a Christian diligence and prudence in the improvement of our talents.

*Ans. 1.*

*Ans. 1.* Whether this inward thirst be not the temper of the greater part of men (though indeed the paroxysm of the disease rages in some more than in others) let any, that hath but half an eye judge.

2. What ever the common plea of Christian diligence and moderation be, will you not acknow-

acknowledge that such souls as these, do insatiably lust for the pottage of the world, who will sell their God, their religion, their souls, their birth-right for a mess of them? If this be not an epidemical spirit among those that profess to bid high for religion, I am horribly, but happily mistaken.

3. It is true in a sence, that it is every one's 3.  
duty to be content with his own estate; but I must tell you, this content proceeds not from the nature, or self-sufficiency of these things. I would fain know where to find that heart, that is so fill'd merely from the fountain of the creature, that hath not some vanities, some corners, that are fill'd with nothing, but the hungry wind of some secret desires of more. Though some few there have been found in all ages, of a mendicant, or Stoical spirit, as *Xenocrates*, *Aristides*, *Philopæmen*, *Agésilas*, and a few others, that have seem'd to contemn a great affluence of worldly riches, not placing their *summum bonum*, or chief good in it; as the generality of men do; at least, practically, but in something else, it may be, no less carnal than this, whereof they have been as jealous, and unsatiably greedy, as those who having plac'd their felicity in gold and silver, have been of this.

4. I freely grant, it is every one's bounden 4.  
duty to be content with his portion in the world, but not with the world for his portion.



*Valde pro-*  
*flatus sum*  
*me nolle se*  
*fatuari.*

I doubt that this is that lies at the bottom of that contentment many have to boast of. I seriously protest, says *Luther*, that I will not be so put off. 'Tis the part of a base, sordid, ignorant, slavish spirit to be content with such a portion. On this account the believer is one of the most unsatisfied souls in the world; all the riches of *India*; all the pleasures, crowns and honours in the earth will not please him, he must have something more, or he is undone. Be his portion in the world what it will, millions, or mites; robes, or rags; pleasures, or pains, he is thankful; but if this should be all, there were no peace with him. Alas! he knows the value and vertue of these lying vanities; he hath that within him that can't live on these dry bones; these huskes will choak him, without some thing else to sweeten and sanctify them to him.

*Mar. 8. 36.*

Nay, as they can't give satisfaction to the desires of the soul, so much less can they make satisfaction for the loss of the soul. *For what shall it profit a man, if he should gain the whole world, and loose his own soul?* Could a whole world come to every Back-sliders share. For men to adventure their utmost penny at once in such useles trifles, as will not vend, nay, which they may be sure will never arrive the port they are bound to, is miserable merchandizing.

4. *What ever the world promises, it can't, of*

it self, make good: & what ever it bestowes it  
 can't secure to you. Therefore they are called Psal. 31. 6.  
Jona. 2. 8. *Vanities, & Lying Vanities*; not that the things  
 themselves are properly guilty of lying; but  
 we through our credulity & great expecta-  
 tions from them, are deceived in them; there-  
 fore they are called *Deceitful riches, &* Mar. 4. 19.  
Pro. 23. 5. *Things that are not*, that is, they are not what  
 we foolishly conceit them to be. We take Pecunia re-  
spondet omni-  
bus.  
Ecc. 18. 11. them, at a distance, for real substantial things;  
 but in hand they prove lighter than vanity; We  
 take them for universal Cordials; but when  
 it comes to, they appear to be rather crosses  
 than comforts; we take them for durable  
 things, friends that will stand by us, *a strong*  
*citty & a high wall in our conceit*; but anon they  
 take wing & fly away, as an eagle towards  
 heaven; we take it for pure gold, but at last  
 it proves but a mass of thick clay, to break  
 our backs: these are our foul mistakes. Sirs!  
 the devil & the world are wont to pay off  
 their servants in such coyn, which at first  
 sight lookes & handles like perfect gold or sil-  
 ver, or the very things they promise to be;  
 but when the enchantment is over, it turnes to  
 leaves, or some loathsome vermins, or excre-  
 ment, & then the cheat appeares.

Again, suppose the world do throw a  
 little of her dead carrion into thy lap, & thou  
 art so blind and besotted as to make thy self a  
 feast on't; yet remember, she can't warrant  
 thy

thy enjoyment of it one day, nor hour. 'Tis a sad story that you read, *Luk. 12. 19, 20.*

'Twas no small matter, as the man thought, that he had scrapd together; his barnes were grown too little for his fields; his cup was full, and began to run over; and to sweeten all this to him, the world tells him of many years, to enjoy it; but alas! how is he mistaken! Had God seald to his quiet enjoyment too? No. *Thou fool this night shall thy soul be required of thee*, while he was looking about for a place to bestow his goods, death had look'd out a place for his bones in the grave, and another for his soul in hell; when his harvest was just come to hand, both earth and hell open, and swallow up all at once. *While the meat was in their moutbes, the wrath of God came upon them, and slew the fattest of them.*

*Psal. 78. 30.*  
31.

*Math. 6. 19.*

Wherefore, lay not up for your selves riches on earth, where moth and rust do corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. Here's no prohibition of a provident care in laying up for our selves, or our posterity; but a holy caution, that we do not lay up our treasure here, and our hearts with it; here's the moth and the rust and the thief, some thing in every injoyment to eat it out; or carry it away. What is layd up to day, may be lost to morrow, they are winged things; nay, we carry about that within us, in the elementary composition of our bodies, that will be a moth and

and a rust to them, and by little and little, eat down the strongest wall that ever was built on the foundations of nature. The seeds of corruption and putrefaction are sown in the best temper'd constitutions, which will surely spring, and blossom, and fall, when the time of the Almond-tree is come, in the Autumn of old age; and then farewell to all the fading beauty and withering hopes of a flattering world for ever.

5. *Their greatest bounty and felicity hath ordinarily more of bitter, than of sweet in it. They are compound things, there's a prickle as well as a rose on the same root.*

*Plus alios quam mellis habet. An virgula metus exanimem non desit; diesque formidare malos fures. horum semper ego optarim pauperrimus esse bonorum. Hor. Serm. l. 1. 5. 1.*

The labour and hazard and sorrow and care in getting and keeping them, eats up all the sweetness of their fruition. Those secret feares, surmises and jealousies; those roving perplexed thoughts; those circumventions, quarrells and wrongs of such as envy, scorn, or hate us, lies as gall and wormwood alwaies at the bottom of this cup. Hath not your own experience yet taught you this?

*E medio fonte leporum surgit amari liquor.*

6. *Nay, lastly, what ever they bestow on you, there is a snare in it. They that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare. 1 Tim. 6. 9. Sirs! the world is a bait, and there is a hook in it. All that the Back-slider hath of the world is a snare to him; his very Table is a snare, & a trap, and a stumbling block and a recompense. His words and actions are a snare. His lands,*

*Rom. 11. 9. Pro. 12. 13.*

his

his goods, his friends are his snares: and this is the misery, he is snared, and caught, and doth not know it; the gin laies hold on his very heart; the more he receives of the world, the deeper he is still ingag'd to it, which runnes out his sin and misery *in infinitum*. We have a proverb, *That there is no gate but an ass laden with gold may enter*: but this is the very carriage that keeps so many thousands out of the gates of heaven; 'tis hard for a rich man to enter there. Now lay these things together, and summ up the Back-sliders wages from the *World*. All that it hath for him is in this life, concernes onely the body, can satisfy neither his desires, nor his wants: much less make amends for his loss other waies: Can't make good what it promises, nor secure what it bestowes. Hath more of bitter, than sweet in it. And when all is done, is but a snare and a trap to him. And is there any such temptation in this? Oh! methink we should need no more to prevail with any rational soul, to forsake and forswear this, of all other service in the world.

Mar. 10. 24  
25.

2. We will also consider a little briefly, what the Back-sliders wages are from the *Flesh*. And this can be no great matter. *Nihil dat quod in se non habet*. Poverty and Vanity it self is like to contribute but poorly to his happiness. For what is the *Flesh*? but a sensible carrion (as one calls it) a portable sepulcher.



pulcher, a domestick thief, a lump of walking clay, a little animated dust, whose very subsistence is but borrowed of the next air. These are the mudwalls within which the soul lives; or rather is imprison'd, and since sin, like the *Leprosy*, hath entred into them, it is become her Pest-house, that she is nowhere in such danger as at home, if we may call this her home, which is indeed but the house of her bondage, or her pilgrim's park. Now sinner, what is it thou art promis'd here, or what dost thou expect from hence?

1. Is *Lust* such a pleasure, which burnes like coals of fire? and frets like a canker at the very root of nature? Is it such an honour to emasculate the mind; and to exchange natures and manners with the stinking gout? are these thy *Politics*? to poyson thy body, to sink thy estate, and to bury thy good name in that deep ditch that *Salomon* tells thee of! *Pro. 23. 27.* Go ask at every gallows in *England*, enquire in every goal, these may inform thee what honour or pleasure their *Lust* hath procur'd for them.

2. Or is *Beauty* a pearl of such price, that heaven it self seems nothing to it? *favour is deceitful and beauty is vain. Pro. 31. 30.* Oh what a glory is this, that flourishes to day, and stinks before to morrow! 'tis a poor kind of happiness, that one fit of sickness, or one flash of lightning, or one slip of a foot, or one prick

Pro. 6. 25.  
&c.

prick of a thorn, or the common fate of old age can undo; if this be thy treasure, do but shut thine eyes, and the fruition of it is gone. Can there be any thing in the world vainer than that which, thou canst wink into nothing? But stay, is there nothing in it, but an innocent vanity? Solomon tells us there is a snare too, he knew it by sad experience. *It hunts for the precious life; it is a fire in a mans bosom, and as hot coals under his feet.* Ask the sons of God in the old world, what they got by the beauty of the daughters of men, Gen. 6. and 7. Ask the house of Pharaoh what they got by it, Gen. 11. 14. 17. Ask holy David what his experience can say in the case. 2 Sam. 11. &c. And look back on the rains of old Troy, see what foul work, a span of fair skin hath made there. Beauty hath ever been wont to be as a rolling stone in the foundations of crowns and scepters. Besides who knows not the proverb, that *fair and foolish*, or *fair and whorish*, are the ordinary concomitants of the same constitution; but to avoid reflections, of this I am sure, it hath never wont to be any great friend to religion, nor to the power of godliness.

3. Or is it thy natural or acquired *parts* that thou trustest in? Oh what an honour is this, for a man to be too wise to stick to his principles! what a credit is it to go merrily, or learnedly to hell. Oh the wit of a little mad sport, or carnal projects that are shortly to end in

in eternal flames! Oh the policy of digging for a dunghil & loosing a crown? What manly prudence is this, to save the skin a while and damn the soul for ever. This is the deep learning, the profound divinity, to dispute religion into any form, that the times shall require; but alas! what will become of all this wit, when God and conscience shall arise to determine the case, according to the true sense of scripture.

4. Or is it thy *Ease* thou so valuest? Surely, 'tis a mad man that will run to hell for ease. *Out of Gods blessing into the warm sun.* 'Tis a sad kind of ease, that for a moments enjoyment incurreth an eternities torment. *Woe to them that are thus at ease.* And now sinner! are these the wages that will content thee, or that can enrich thee. But if this be too little; remember

3. There's *Satan* will be thy pay-master too; him thou wilt serve, and therefore with him thou must sup. Ah! when God shall deliver up the forlorn wretch into the hands of these tormenters, to pay him off, with what fury and spight they will or can; when those hideous monsters shall open their devouring jaws, and fasten their bloody clutches upon him, and drag him away to everlasting burnings, it must needs cause him to bethink his diligence in such a service. Are the tender mercies of the wicked cruel? what are the studied

and

and contrived & unlimited cruelties of devils then? Oh that ever men should be so strangely besotted, to chuse and even to dote upon their own destruction, and that in despite of all the freest, and fullest offers, and strongest arguments of the gospel.

4. But from God, it may be, thou expectest better things, yea thou mayst be sure God will not wrong thee; there is no unrighteousness nor iniquity in him; but if thou wilt know what thou mayst warrantably expect from him, turn to *Isa. 40. 11.* *This shall ye have at my hand, ye shall ly down in sorrow;* In a sorrowful place, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. No other melody but the howlings and yellings of devils, and the doleful groans and shrieks, the heart-renting notes of poor damned miscreants. In a sorrowful case; under the unsupportable curle and vengeance of God, and that for ever. Ah what bitter agonies, what restless pangs are these poor despairing wretches wrestling and tossing under. And with a sorrowful company must thou ly down at last; when thou hast been tir'd out in the slavish bondage of the world, or the crippling taskes of thy unreasonable lusts, and thy poor soul gaspes within thee for a time of refreshing, then must thou depart with devils, and take thy woful bed in hell. All that thy heart can imagine to render a case dreadful and sad, thou mayst assure thy

*Isa. 40. 28.*

*at 8. 20. 21.*

thy self to meet with there, and infinitely more. Ah 'twill be a gloomy and formidable evening, when God shall arise to reckon with Back-sliders, and to give them according to their works, then they shall have eyes to see what they have done, & time enough to repent too. He that made them will not have mercy *Isa. 27. 11.* on them, and he that formed them will shew them no favour.

I might tell thee what thy wages are in this life, as little as thou art aware. *The curse of the Lord is in the house of the wicked. Pro. 3. 33. And he is angry with him every day. Psal. 7. 11. His portion is cursed in the earth. Job. 24. 18.* The curse lies in his basket and in his store, in his fields and in his streets, in his bags and in his barns, in his trade, in his body, in his posterity and in his soul too; though he feed him, though he cloath him, though he advance him with the promotion of fools, yet 'tis in wrath and anger, there's nothing of love, nothing of peace, nothing but a curse and a frown with it. And now sinner what are the thoughts and purposes of thy heart? wilt thou forsake thy Lord and master *Christ*, and seek further in hopes to mend thy market? canst thou yet think that the *world*, the *flesh* or the *devil* can afford thee true happiness, at a cheaper or easier rate than God can or will do, who is the fountain of it? Or else is it thy own ruine thou thirstest for? if so, go on: no doubt  
L but



but thou mayst shortly be miserable enough, if there be power enough in torments and tormenters enough in hell to make thee miserable, thou mayst be as miserable as thou canst desire, and as ever thou canst endure.

But here's the case, who hath believed our report? who is there that takes himself much concern'd in this matter? methink I hear you say. 'Tis true, the Back-sliders case is very sad, but God forbid that I should be any of them. Ah Sirs! this is the devils strong-hold, could we but storm him out of this fort, there were hope; but till then, we beat the air and speak to stocks and stones, every shot falls besides the mark. This! This is the cause of the barrenness of the gospel, and the unprofitableness of the word; men won't believe any thing to be amiss in themselves, God tells them plainly, what their cases are, thy can't deny it, yet they won't believe, nay they can in general confess it, both to God and men freely, and one would think, feelingly, yet they won't believe it. If we reach out a band to one that is weary, and offer a word of comfort to a drooping spirit; every one then presumes on a share, and flatter's himself in his conceited right, nay, ordinarily none so eagerly bark for, and catch at this, as those dogs that have no portion in it. But if we begin to tell them the truth, and to sling some of the thunderbolts of Scripture against their lusts, then they

they hear every one for his neighbour, and ly like unpenetrable rocks in our way, either to break our arrows, or to glance them off to the wounding of those, that are (it may be) more innocent than themselves. Alas sinner! mayst thou not be so much beholden to thy conscience, as *David* once was to *Nathan*, when he told him, *Thou art the man?* Are there no such queries yet moving within thee, as were once among the Disciples, when Christ had told them, that one of them would prove a traitour? Can none of us mistrust our selves, but every one condemn his brother? This is the devils shield, whereby he wards the sword of the word and spirit; till he be spoyl'd of this, there's no access to the conscience. Wherefore as ever you hope or desire to be deliver'd from the sin and curse of the Back-slider, be perswaded to deal honestly and like friends with your own souls. Now search and judge and condemn your selves, that you be not at last condemned; remember what was spoken by way of *distinction*, and judge your selves by the rules you find there. I shall add a little more here, and the good Lord strike in this once with his word, and strike home some deep convictions on those senseless impenitent spirits, that we may smite on our thighs, and lay our mouthes in the dust, and begin to see that, in and by our selves, that we could never hitherto see,

And here I must begin with the whole, and consider our selves as we are *corpus aggregatum*, a rational church or people. 'Twas the sad complaint of the Prophet long ago, *ye have wearied the Lord with your words* (how much more then with your works) *yet ye say wherein have we wearied him?* Mal. 2. 17. What is our transgression or whereof are we reprov-able? is not this thy language O house of *England*? wilt thou wipe thy guilty mouth, *Pro. 30. 20.* and say, I have done no wickedness? come let us reason together.

I. I. Remember the spiritual beauty of thy former Generations; how glorious were thy inner parts, even while thou layest among the pots; while the black cloud of Antichristian ignorance, idolatries and Persecutions had overshadowed thee.

I. I. How beautiful wasthy Christian *Simpli-*  
*city*, thy dove-like innocence and plainness  
of heart? while the tongues and the hearts of  
thy Professors dwelt together, and their faces  
did not bely their consciences! I need not have  
recourse to Ecclesiastical Records for its  
*οὐκ ἔστιν ἀποδείξις* demonstration; many of those bloody massa-  
*κράτης* cres and inhumane butcheries unto which  
*τοῖς διαι.* they were often treacherously trappan'd by  
the dissimulations of their enemies are the  
crimson evidences of their holy simplicity and  
Christian innocence. Besides, there are thou-  
sands yet in *England* that may sadly look  
back

back from their hoary heads and compare their youth with their more miserable old age, and tell us what a vast difference they observe, between this and the former generation on this account. We are become a subtil people; *fronti nulla fides* full of craft and guile, and new-devised colours and complements to varnish stincking sepulchers; we are grown wise, but 'tis to do evil, and to undo our selves; too wise to be honest. *Loquere ut te videam* was an old rule even among heathens, *Speak that I may see thee*, that I may understand what thou art; but now mens words are their veils and curtains, not to discover but to dissemble that which lies within, Oh! how hath this hell-born mystery of shuffling and courting and equivocating insinuated it self into the bosom of all callings, perswasions and practices of men among us. Canst thou clear thy self of this guilt, ô rebellious house! and yet art thou innocent?

2. How pleasant and happy was the union, and communion of thy saints! as so many bodies, jointly animated with one and the same soul, and so many souls, uniformly acted by one spiritual principle. *Animo animaque inter se miscebantur*, says *Tertullian* of the primitive Christians; they were one in him, who was one with the Father. They were like a company of horses in *Pharaoh's* chariots, unanimously engag'd in the same cause, and minding

Eph. 6.4, 5, 6.

the same thing, this was the blessed fruit of their bloody lashes, it beat them together and prest them on. They were one body and one spirit, had one Lord, one faith, one baptism and one God. Saints were never dearer with saints, than when cheapest with the world. But alas! where is now thy unity of spirit become? Poor *England* hath been in hard travail, we looked for a *Reformation*; but she hath brought forth a *Peleg*, a son of *Divisions*. We have gotten as many faiths as we have fancies; as many religions as interests, and as many Gods as we have lusts. Can we be one, that are possess'd with a spirit whose name is *Legion*? May it not be said of us (with a very mean *Hyperbole*) as one reports of the Indian *Bramens*? That almost every family, I might adde, almost every person, hath his peculiar conceits and toys in or about the matters of religion. And oh! how idolatrously fond are men of the monstrous brats of their own brains! or the superstitious issues of their tyrannical wills! when once they are hatcht, 'tis ignorance, heresy, sedition &c. in any one that shall presume to oppose or question them. Are these the fruits of our spiritual growth, or the palpable demonstrations of a gross apostasy? and the dismal omens of that which a blind, proud wanton, stupid, hypocritical people will by no means be made to foresee?

*Numerantur  
secla prae-  
cipui nominis  
eae. Sed pra-  
ter has minus  
illustrum  
magna est  
multitudo, ita  
ut singula  
familiae pecu-  
liarem fore  
foveant reli-  
gionem.*



3. How amiable was thy Christian *Charity*? how tenderly affection'd were thy follow-members towards one another, while they were ready, not onely to lay out their fortunes, but to lay down their lives for the Brethren? while there mutual love was the badge and glory of their profession? the envy and terrour of their enemies; the joynts and sinewes, and consequently the strength and vigour of the mystical body! this was their beauty and their bulwark too. Like a sheafe of arrowes, whose bond was sacred and inviolate. But alas! how is the gall-less *Turtle* degenerated into a ravenous *Vulture*, a bird of prey! the sociable compassionate *Dove*, into an unnatural flint-hearted *Ostridge*! and the *Lambs* are become as *Leopards*! in stead of pittying one another, we have learn't to persecute; in stead of relieving, we have learn't to revile; in stead of bearing with one another, we fall a biting, and in stead of loving, we have learn't to Lord it over one another, in stead of the fir-tree is come up the thorn; and in stead of the myrtle tree, is come up the bryer, which are for a signe that it shall be cut off. From the confused *Chaos* of our lusts and interests hath sprung a very *Babel* in our judgments and opinions, & from hence our miserable and all most incurable breaches in affection. Our peace, our ease, our liberty have undone our charity, by dilating its vitals have cast it into this strange *slayer*. The proper and probable way to right

see 1/4. 35.

13.

this (if we be not past righting) is by reverberation, contracting this scatter'd heat by the force of some flesh-displeasing *Antiperistasis*. Lord open *Englands* eyes, and turn the hearts of the fathers to the children, and the disobedient to the wisdom of the just, to make ready a people prepared for the Lord.

*Luk. 1. 17.*

4. 4. How happy and regular was thy holy zeal? The many waters of thine adversaries could not quench it, neither could the floods drown it. Thy zeal was the true fire of the sanctuary, there was both light and heat in it, a zeal according to knowledge, these were thy two wings, as *Bernard* alludes, on which thou didst fly, not from, but through, and above all the bitter storms of thy boisterous climate. Ah with what heroick spirits were thy first reformers inspir'd! how earnestly did they contend for the faith that was once delivered to the saints! how heartily did they groan! how unanimously did they conspire! and how *Jacob-like* did they wrestle both with God and men, for the Kingdom of Christ? and how joyfully did they embrace their imperfect dawns of a reformation! they wanted no faces to appear, nor tongues to plead with a crooked and adulterous generation. The divine flames of their heavenly zeal, could turn the burning piles of martyrdom into beds of roses. These were indeed thy worthies; men of renown, and valiant for

*Cant. 8. 7.*

for the truth. But alas for us! their spirit departed with them. Our zeal is now of another line, hot enough in some cases; but 'tis a preternatural heat, like the fire of hell, heat without light. Zeal acted on wrong objects, on base ends, in undue measures, and by none, or by false rules is common enough; if compassing sea and land to proselyte men into factions and parties be zeal. If crying *Hosannab* to mens parts and gifts; if the unconscionable imposition of antichristian injunctions; if the ejecting and trampling upon fellow-servants; if firing and banding at one another; if mens lively and rigorous serving the times, the devil and their lusts be zeal, we have zeal enough, and more than enough for our selves, and for all the generations that ever shall succeed us. Be asham'd, and lay thy mouth in the dust ô house of *England*! would thy primitive, or thy later saints and martyrs ever have believ'd, that such coals could have been rak'd out of their ashes? Theirs was altar-fire; but thine are some of *Sampson's* brands, fastned between the foxes tails. Theirs gave light to the house, but thine hath fired the house. Their lamps shined; but thine stink. Theirs was as incense; but thine an abomination. Either thou art too hot, or else too cold, and so, neither hot nor cold, of a *Laodicean* temper; if thy worldly interest be engag'd, thou art not enough; if thy flesh be but touch'd,

presently thy spleen is troubled, and thy gall begins to boyl over in revenge, these are thy indispensable concernments, not an *Ace* to be abated here; but if it be the matters of thy God and of thy conscience, then 'tis but a

18. 18. 15. *Question of words and names*; a harmless ceremony, a matter of indifferency; thy cold-hearted *Latitudinarian Gallio's* care little for it, what ever the innovation be, how antiscritural or antichristian soever, it is but a question of words, which must for peace-sake, that is, for their bellies-sake and their ease-sake be dispensed with. Judge now, and let all the reformed churches of God in the earth judge, yea, let *Rome* her self judge too, is this thy coming out of *Babylon*, or thy returning again to it?

5. 5. How lovely and Christ-like was thy *Humility* and lowliness of spirit, while thou wast little in thine own sight? Thy daughters were *Sarah's* daughters, whose adorning was not that outward adorning of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel; but the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible; even the ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price. But oh! in what antick garbs, in what whorish attires, in what quaint cures and fashions, are thy lewd wantons now emblazoning their pride and folly! Thou who wert once comely as the *Dave*, and glorious as the
- 1 Pet. 3. 3. 4.
- the

the *Kings daughter*, whose perfect beauty is that of the inner man, art now become like the strutting Peacock, whose onely excellency consists in his gaudy plumes. That heavenly jewel, that was once treasur'd up in the cabinet of thy heart, is now (to thy shame) exchanged for a glittering toy to bespangle thy fingers, or to hang in thine ears to ensnare the eyes that are *μεσοῖς μοιχαλίδ* & full of the adul- 2 Pet. 2. 4.  
terests. That which was once expended in feeding the hungry, in cloathing the naked, in relieving the saints, is now bestowed in a fools-coat, and the costly and ridiculous accoutrements of pride, this is that greedy Idol that devours the portion of the poor. Oh! how shamefully hath this vanity and madness appear'd, even in the strictest ranks of thy professour; thy saints of the first visible magnitude. Those that should have been the patterns and patrons of a humble gravity, and sober modesty, and courteous affability, have been too too ready to trick up themselves in the scandalous dresses of an harlot, and that even in the day that *God hath called thee to* Isa. 22. 12.  
*weeping and to mourning and to baldness and to girding with sackcloth*, even then hast thou had thy paints and powders, thy spots and plaited hair, thy mock-locks, which have been but the sorry excrements of the poor, (it may be) the impious spoils of the dead, whose carcases are stinking in their graves, and their  
souls

--- sed quid  
Non faciunt  
alii, cum tu  
militia sum-  
mas Critice  
--- Iuv. 3.  
Satyr. 3.



souls howling in hell. Oh! be ashamed and confounded! but alas! whom do I intreat? our faces are as the rock, we cannot blush, besides, compare thy present with thy former generations in other fruits and characters of their humility; was their envy and bitterness and supercilious ambition and vain ostentation like thine? would they have durst to have skrew'd up their nicities and opinions to such a height! would they ever have insisted so peremptorily and irrefragably on their private fancies and persuasions? would they ever have trampled on their brethren and have feather'd their nests with the ruins of the innocent as thou hast done?

6. 8. How generous and laudable was thy *Publicque spirit*, while no man sought his own, but every man anothers wealth? when no interest in the world was admitted rival with that of the gospel? when the publique good was the throne, not the foot-stool? How gladly could thy professors sacrifice their fortunes, liberties & lives on the common interest! they did not go about to build their own houses, while the house of God lay desolate: 'twas their very ambition to spend and be spent on the publique service of the church of Christ; to be negligent or unfaithful in such a cause was branded with some of the deepest *Anathemas*. But now this cursed *Curapeculi*, this greedy lust of the eyes and pride of life, hath so debas'd

bas'd and emasculated thy noble spirit, that, Judas-like, every thing is a wast, that goes not into thy private bags. 'Tis true, thou hast a publique spirit, and so hath the thief, that robs on the Kings high way, like those, *Hos. 6. 9. As troops of robbers wait for a man, so the company of priests murder in the way by consent.* This publique spirit is a publique spoyl and a publique pest. To usurp the royal prerogatives of Christ, and exercise Lordship on mens faith and conscience is a publique spiritedness that God abhorres. A publique spirit acted and guided by private ends is that which lays Kingdoms and Churches desolate, and is ever wont to be avenged with publique judgments; alas! I can scarce, for shame, mention *England's* publique spirit.

7. Very high and inestimable was the *Price* 7. thou once sett'st on the *gospel*. 'Twas thy diademe on thy head, and a pearl of price in thy eye; thou couldst take joyfully the spoyling of all things to make this thy honourable and gainful purchase. Time was when thou couldst give more for one chapter of Gods word, than most of thy present generation will do for their whole interest in the word; never hadst thou more pretended, never less unfeigned love to Christ than now; godliness was once thy gain, but now gain is become thy godliness; high strains of devotion, and mimical mock-shews of whining affections;  
oh

Oh how brisk are the butterflies, while the warm beams favour them! Oh thy heroick zeal and Christian courage, while thou art shooting in Gods bow at the devils mark! Time was, that thy dearest blood was not too good to seal thy testimony to the truths of God; but now a wedge of gold, or a Babylonish garment is enough to mortgage profession, truth, religion and all upon. Ah sinful hypocritical nation! hast thou none to mock with but thy God? wilt thou tell him with such solemnity how much thou honourest his gospel, how jealous thou art for his ordinances, how tender of the glorious concerns of his dear Son? doth not he that formed the heart understand? doth not he know what thou art that hath been forties of years wearied with thee? Alas! those that priz'd the gospel in the simplicity of their hearts are dead, we have enough of those that love it as a cloak, to hide that which they are ashamed the world should see, and which they may shift or lay aside as occasion requires; few that love religion as their skin, which they cannot be wronged in, but they are offended, and which they will not part with till they part with life and all. God, methink, is speaking of *England* as once of *Jerusalem*. *Jer. 22. I remember thee the kindness of thy youth, the love of thine espousals, when thou went'st after me in the wilderness, in a land that was not sown.* And if there

is no other way to reduce us to our wilderness-love and obedience, we must be reduced to our wilderness-estate.

8. Thy *Stedfastness* of spirit and *valour* for 8. the *truth* was once spoken of throughout the Christian world; of whom it is recorded, that the *Britons* after they had received the faith, never started back; but of all people were the strongest in the faith, maugre all their persecutions. But *England* (*Ephraim*-like) is now become a *deceitful bow*, *they are returned, but not to the most high*. With the *dog* to his vomit, & with the washed *sow* to her wallowing in the mire; every one to the imagination of his own heart, turning from sin to ungodliness, filling up the measures of iniquity, and growing ripe apace for a fatal *sickle*. Stedfast enough to hold fast deceit, and to go on frowardly in the way of our own hearts; but as to covenants, promises and profession, unstable as the wind. Ab. & Mon.  
Hos. 7. 16.

9. How close, humble and circumspect 9. was thy *walking with God*? when thy saints spent more time in the closets, and less in those needless gaddings, and half-hearted complements; when their conversations were in heaven, and they set themselves in earnest thitherward; when 'twas their business to be holy, and their care to keep themselves unspotted of the world. But now loose walking is accounted the safest walking, to keep touch with the times, and a right hand of fellowship with the

the religion in fashion, is the onely creditable way of professing. He that can steer his religion and conscience on every *point* of the worlds *compass*, is the onely *navigator* in those dayes of robbery and spoyl.

10. 10. How faithful and zealous was thy conscientious care in *Relative duties*? with what diligence and delight couldst thou improve all occasions of instructing thy families, and training them up in the way they should go, to preserve them from the common errors, scandals and idolatries of the times, and to establish them in faith and godliness? with what sincerity, meekness and compassion couldst thou watch over thy fellow-members and brethren, warning those that walk'd disorderly? In how high an esteem, and due honour of love were thy spiritual *fathers* had, those whom God had sent and set over thee, to divide to thy children their portions of the bread of life? How ductile, loyal and faithful was thy obedient spirit toward that civil authority which God had plac'd over thee, how sacred was that part of the divine image held to be in those whom providence had invested with it, not onely in the good and gentle but even in the froward. But alas! the miserable back-slidings of the present generation in respect of relative duties! than which I scarce know any one thing that more immediately threatens the very foundations of a people:
- How



How far may we seek to find an *Abraham*, a *Joshua*, a *Lois*, a *Eunice*, whose houses are the well tutor'd schooles of Christ? I confesse book-learning is become somewhat more common than in former generations, but what doth this signify being alone, but the rendring persons so much the fitter for the devils service? who is there, that watches and prayes with his family and every member of it as he that knows he must give an account to God for their souls! Oh that our *Eli's* houses were not too full of *Eli's* sin, and consequently of *Eli's* sons! where shall we find that person that is fitt'd as he ought to give or receive a Christian reproof, alas! we are grown too bitter to exhort, and too proud to be exhorted, unless in a few cold formal words of course wherein few or none look on themselves as much concern'd, or which is worse in so vain fight and jesting a manner as those fools that make a mock of sin. I need not shew the world those deep stains of blood that are found on thy skirts; of innocent blood, of ministers blood, of nobles blood, of *sacred* blood. The Lord pardon the folly and wickedness of his ensnared people, and avenge himself on those, by whose hellish craft these snares have been spread.

Remember thy *Groans* under that antichristian yoke in *Queen Maries* dayes, when the blood of thy *Jerusalem* was purg'd by the flames

of martyrdom then were thy *vitals* sound and vigorous. In thy affliction thou sought'st him early against whom thou hast ever since carried thy self proudly and perfidiously: oh sottish *England*! will nothing open thine eyes, but thy own blood? doth all the skill and haste thou can'st make to undo thy self seem little to thee? Surely the *Poets Niobe* was never so stupefied, among all their monstrous changings they never feign'd a *metamorphosis* like thine.

3. 3. Remember thy *vowes* and pretenses under thy late intestine calamities. What did all thy *declarations* and protestations signify, but the varnishing of the designes of villany, and the gross abusing of the credulous multitude with the loud cries of *holiness* and *reformation*. But when God calls a people to *reformation*, and the devil stirres up and actuals their *reformers*, they are wont to do ever as thou hast done. Ah! hypocritical nation, doth it not to this day appear to thy shame what a price thou sett'st on *reformation*! were thy unhappy strugglings, for religion indeed, or for an accurst interest? But alas the same *malus genius* that bewitch't as then, bewitches us still, and what shall we say? *Deus quos perdit prius dementat.*

u. Denominatio  
tio fit a ma-  
jore.

To speak more particularly, if peradventure there may be a remnant, whose ears are circumcis'd to receive instruction. The ques-  
tion

tion is, *guilty, or not guilty.* Are we a generation of Back-sliders, or no? give me leave to plead it a little with a few interrogatories.

1. *Are we some of Adams posterity?* descended from the common original of mankind?

Sure we can't deny, but we are all one mans children, *Adam* was our father of old, and not innocent, but guilty *Adam*; therefore as

*Adam* was in his lapsed estate, such are we in our natural estate. *By one man sin entred into the world, and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.* Rom.

5. 12. *ēφ ω* for that all have sinned, rather in him, or, *in whom* (as some read it) all have sinned what ever his faith in the promise were, and his justification by faith; his personal holiness concerns himself onely, not us:

*Merè personalia non propagantur.* From the

seed of the olive springs no other than a wild olive. Circumcised parents begate uncircum-

cised children. *Adam* never begate a man in his estate of innocency, from whom we might

derive our pedigree, his firstborn was a *Cain*, Gen. 4. 1. 2.

a man in his own depraved likeness. The fountain was first polluted before ever it

brake out into a strain. The person first infected the nature, and ever since the nature in-

fects the person. *Who can bring a clean thing out of an unclean?* was *Adam* a Back-slider and

are not his children too? If I meet with any that question the natural contagion of original

*Ex oleo semine non nascitur olivaster, Aug.*

*Persona primum infecta naturam, post naturam infecta personam, Jul. 14. 4.*

*Cassand. de  
pec. orig.  
Veg. de Nat.  
& Leg. imbe-  
cil. li. 2. cap.  
6.*

sin, if he be of the *Roman* breed, I refer him to their own *Eccius* in his dispute at *Worms*. Their approved *Vega*, and others of their doctors. If a *Pelagian* (unto whom indeed the heresy more peculiarly belongs) I refer him to *Augustine*, that *malleus hereticorum*, who beats them into the dust, both in this and in all other their damnable doctrines. But if he be a *Protestant*, I hope these scriptures may satisfy him, *Rom. 7. 18.* For I know that in me (that is in my flesh) dwelleth no good thing. *Psal. 51. 5.* Behold I was shapen in iniquity and in sin did my mother conceive me. *Eph. 2. 3.* Among whom also we all had our conversation in times past in the lusts of our flesh, fulfilling the desires of the flesh and of the mind, and were by nature the children of wrath even as others. Now sinner! which way wilt thou evade the accusation? Art thou one of guilty *Adams* children, and yet not guilty?

Ob.

Wilt thou tell me that thou art born of believing parents, whose children are holy? *1 Cor. 7. 14.* And if the root be holy so are the branches. *Rom. 11. 16.*

Ans.

This is another such plea as theirs was. *Job. 8. 59.* Abraham is our father. Christ gives them a short and a smart answer ver. 44. Ye are of your father the devil. 'Tis true, those that are born of believing (that is professing) parents are holy; and so was *Judas* too. Holiness here signifies a relation, not a quality; the pro-

*Sanctitas si-  
gnificat rela-  
tionem, non  
qualitatem.  
Keller Mi-  
scel. Ex.  
Scharp. cur.*

pagation of grace is spiritual not carnal. For all this external holiness thou mayst be a child of wrath and ly under Gods *Anathema*, as well as those back-sliding Jews, whose carcasses fell in the wilderness. This is so far from excusing, that it is none of the least of the aggravations of thy sin. Wert thou not a professor, born and bred within the pale of the church, thou hadst not had sin (comparatively) but now thou hast no cloak for thy sin. The sins of professors are more properly *back-sliding*, than any others sins. God never complain'd of *Edom*, *Moab*, *Affyria* &c. For their *Back-slidings*, their sins, though never so great, are not capable of this denomination, 'tis *Israel* that is the *Back-slider*.

*Joh. 13. 22.*

But art thou hoping yet to make thy escape under the wing of our *English Liturgie*? which seems to insinuate as if thy *Baptism* were like to do strange things for thee in this case! which tells thee that *being by nature born in sin, and the children of wrath, we are hereby made the children of grace, members of Christ, children of God, and inheritors of the kingdom of heaven.*

*Ob.*

*Chur. Car.*

If this were true, in that strict sense where in too many (to their destruction) are apt to mistake it, 'twere well for all those that are baptized; nay, who then could perish, that have but pass under this ordinance, unless

*Ans. 1.*



we subscribe to that *mother of harlots* in another article of her perverse doctrine, and hold a falling from grace; the contrary whereof hath been already prov'd both from scripture and reason.

2. 2. We know there is a *Baptism*, whereby those that are by nature children of wrath, are made the spiritual children of grace, mystical and real members of Christ, &c. But 'tis not the *Baptism* of water, the putting away the filth of the flesh; but the answer of a good conscience, or (to use the words of the same catechise) *The inward and spiritual grace*. Except a man be born of water and of the spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God. *Joh. 3. 5.* Neither is the sign and the thing signified in this case, as the shadow and the substance, which alway attend each other; the spirit of grace is free, and not tyed to ordinances, and sad experience, as well as scripture abundantly evinces that all are not Israel that are of Israel. Whence we conclude with the Apostle, that neither circumcision availeth anything, nor uncircumcision, but a new creature. *Gal. 6. 15.*

3. 3. Whatever thy devotion to *Liturgies* be, I must tell thee thou shalt not be judg'd at last according to mans *Liturgies*; but according to Gods scriptures: all the works of man must pass under the solemn arraignment, and impartial judgement of God; therefore they are like to defend thy cause but poorly, further than

than they appear to be of God. *The fire shall try every mans work of what sort it is.* Hay and stubble will prove but a sorry protection against devouring flames.

4. But to retort thine own plea, thou sayst 4. thou art baptiz'd. Hence I infer, that thy guilt is by so much the greater. What is baptism? but a seal of the covenant of grace, those sacred *Indentures* between God and man, the solemn listing of thy self under Christ thy captain, the distinguishing *Mark*, which the heavenly Shepherd sets on his flock, the *Liverie* and *Badge* of his family, and the *Pledge* of thy fidelity. *Know ye not that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death. Therefore we are buried with him, by baptism, into his death, that like as Christ was raised up from the dead, by the glory of the father, even so we also should walke in newness of life.* Rom. 6. 3, 4. We are baptized into his death, intimating not onely our *Priviledge*, but our *promise* and *ingagement* to our *Priviledge*. Baptism (especially as administred in those warm climates of the eastern churches) is a lively representation of the death and resurrection of Christ, wherein all his members, being made symbolically conformable to their head, in their communion with him in his death and humiliation, so also in his resurrection and glory. Our *Engagement*, or duty, this is twofold, *Privative* and *Positive*.

*Ut percipere  
rentis vim  
mortis ejus  
non solum  
quod ad m-  
ritum sed  
etiam quo l ad  
efficaciam.  
&c. Piscar.  
Schol in loc.*

1. **Privative.** ver. 6, 7. *Knowing this that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. For he that is dead is freed from sin.* As the body of Christ was crucified for sin, so the body of sin is crucified in us, by the death of Christ. The body of sin, that is, that natural inbred power of sin, that drawing *Magnetick* influence that, like a smoaking snuf, catches at every occasion, and attracts the flame to it; this, though it be not wholly extinguisht, yet is weakned and reduc'd to an irrecoverable case, 'tis in a loosing way, though it may rage like a dying beast, it shall never reign more. Art thou baptized into his death? Remember, the baptism of Christ includes that of *John*, which was a baptism of repentance, thou art engag'd to deny thy self, and all thy selfish principles, and inclinations, to be dead and blind and dead to all motions, suggestions, examples, enticements or persuasions, whatsoever may any way tend to the dishonour of God, the reproach or obstruction of the free course of the gospel, or to the prejudice of thy own or others souls.

2. **Positive.** This death with Christ is in order to a new life in him. To Christ we are not baptiz'd into his death that we may dy dead in trespass and sin, but that through death we may pass from death, and walk in newness of

*Vitæ peccati,  
sive peccati  
sive illi  
peccandi  
enervata  
vetula, ut  
non possit  
tanto impetu  
irumpere  
ut ei servia-  
mus. Ibid.*

*Christi  
peccati  
sive illi  
peccandi  
enervata  
vetula, ut  
non possit  
tanto impetu  
irumpere  
ut ei servia-  
mus. Ibid.*

of life. For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection. The Apostles allegorical Climax is observable here, wherein we have this threefold gradation in the work of sanctification, all which is signified by, and sealed to in our baptism. 1. Here is the death to sin. *ver. 2, 3.* 2. The burial of sin, *ver. 4.* Lastly, the resurrection from sin, *ver. 5.* So that we here engage, as the servant, whose ear was boar'd, to all ready, chearful, faithful, diligent and perpetual service and obedience, active and passive, to serve him in wet and heat, not onely in pleasant, but in painful duties, to own Christ as our captain and Lord, against all the world besides. Now Sirs, reflect a little on your baptismal vows, have you indeed dedicated as the sworn enemies of the world, the flesh and the devil? nay, have not those rather been your Lords? Let conscience speak, wherein hath the most and the choice of your time, of your care, of your affections, your love, delight and jealous fear? whereon have your wits & parts been mostly employed? Is it hard to answer such a question? Don't your hearts and lives witness to your faces, and is not this, to back-

*slide* from an earnest (and I trust a good) profession. But here, it may be, will be thy next refuge at least in thy secret thoughts. This true, we were some times darkness, but now are  
 T S we

we light in the Lord. Even such were not onely some, but all of us, as the whole world, that lyeth in wickedness; *but (we hope) we are washed, but we are sanctified, but we are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.* Washed not onely in the water of baptism, but in the laver of regeneration, and therefore are no more to be numbred among the Back-sliders.

*Ans.* 1. 1. 'Twill be well indeed if thy hopes never make thee ashamed: I must tell thee, thou art then one of the happiest creatures on this side heaven.

2. Yet let me ask thee, may it not be worth thy labour to examin once more, whether it be so in good earnest? It is too too evident that most men in the Christian world do eternally perish in the unsuspected confidence of such hopes.

3. But grant it be so, will this excuse thee from the guilt of Back-sliding, or rather, doth it not aggravate it? Wherefore I subjoyn.

3. Is not every Act of sin one step from God? and every such step an act of back-sliding? If so, then much more sins after conversion. Every sin, be it never so small (if there were any such thing as a small sin) makes its motion; every motion is toward God, or from God. Can any one think that sin can help a soul nearer to God? 'tis true, it may accidentally and even-  
tually,



tuallly, but surely not directly or *per se*. Sin after conversion is not barely a back-sliding, but a breach of wedlock. *Return, for I am married to you. Jer. 3. 14.* The unfaithfulness of a servant is bad enough, but of a wife far worse. *Therefore I will judge thee, as women that break wedlock and shed blood, are judged. Ezek. 16. 38.* Regeneration is a laver or washing, so then every sin after conversion, is a returning to that filth we were washed from. Now Sirs! what think ye? are you guilty or not? Can you possibly be such strangers to your selves, as not to observe any thing amiss by your selves? what! are their no relicts, no remains of the old *Leaven* to be found in yow? none of the old *Scurf* in your vessels! none of the old aches, deadness and distortions in your spiritual limbs? are you restor'd to such a perfection of parts & degrees, as that you can run the ways of God without deviating, halting or fainting? is there no spot or tincture to be found on you? I hope you are not so fondly and falsely conceited of your own righteousness; 'tis true there is such an estate in an other world. *Eph. 5. 27.* But till there be a new heaven and a new earth, this shall never be, while we are sojourning here in the tents of *Kedar*, the best of us are too well like the children of *Kedar*. *In many things we offend all. Who can say I have made my heart clean, I am pure from my sin?*

*Tit. 3. 5.  
1 Cor. 6. 11.*

777  
*aratus abeo  
nebratus est.  
Jan. 3. 2.  
Pro. 20. 9.*

4. 4. Have you never solemnly repented?  
 47. 3. 19. this must necessarily be granted, or you can never make good your former plea; for he that never repented was never converted. But have you never sinn'd after repentance? yea, in those very particulars, whereof you have repented? hath God never caught you in the same snare of the devil, from which he had once and again delivered you? yea, and brought you on your knees for? Did you ever repent of your pride, your worldliness, your impatience, uncharitableness, passions, discontent, unbelief, sloth-fulness, drunkenness, lying, lust, neglect of known duties & the like; and were you never found guilty in any of these, after the first conviction? or have you not often return'd to your confessed, and lamented follies? Is this to go forward or backward think you? what finer word have you for it, than back-sliding? what is repentance in the nature and proper effects of it, but the disgorging of sin, the laying down of that heavy and sinking burden on his shoulders, who hath purchased and promised rest and beareth our iniquities? now to return to those sins again, which we had once thus layed aside, whether it be through willfulness or unwatchfulness, is to make void our repentance; at least *externally*, as to the present fruit and evidence of it; it is to frustrate the work of the spirit, and to deny what we have done

done or profest against such or such a sin, and is not this a manifest and inexcusable piece of apostasy from God?

5. Were you never under the power of some close *convictions* by the ministry of the word, or the dispensation of a providence? Did you never feel your hearts grown warm, and your affections of godly sorrow or joy ready to burn within you, through the secret censures or witnessings of conscience? But have not these flames often prov'd mere flashes, and quickly expir'd, and the conviction blown off, like letters on the sand, by the wind of the next temptation? Can't you remember that ere now you have found your hearts touch'd and cast into a melting, longing, self-abasing and Christ-admiring frame, when you seem'd you could even have dyed for him, sick of love, have closed with him on his hardest terms, ready to kiss his rod and stoop to his cross, to have drunk of his cup, and be baptiz'd with his baptism, and say *Amen* to every duty, able to wash his feet in your tears, mourning like doves in your solitary corners, while the days of your grief and fears were upon you? May I not ask you how, what's become of all this? how have these convictions issued? where's the fruit of them? what are they more than some sick qualms, and fits of hypocritical extasies? like the way of a ship in the sea or of an unfaithful man with a maid. While you  
have

*Pro. 30. 19.* have been sometimes under the efficacious bel-  
 lows of an ordinance, it may be you seem'd  
 to blaze, but when these breathings are over,  
 are but little the warmer, yea, even on Sab-  
 bath days, while in publique with others you  
 know how to comport with them in words  
 and gestures, at least so as to commend your  
 devotion before men, but in private almost  
 as vain and as worldly as on other days; so in  
 some company, your spirits are rais'd, through  
 some good discourse to a very high peg, but  
 change your company, and you change your  
 temper, if your next company be carnal and  
 their discourses carnal, you are ready to  
 strike in with them, as if you were in-  
 spir'd with the same spirit, or (which is  
 as bad) like the Pharisee secretly to justify  
 your selves, as more holy, and to censure and  
 despise your brethren without doing your  
 duty in a wise and compassionate admonition  
 of them. Surely those that seem to live in both  
 elements, are truly alive in neither. Now Sirs!  
 let me seriously ask you again; what we shall  
 call this? Is it to go forward or backward?  
 'Tis true, as to the state in general there may  
 be some dull slow kind of progression under  
 many accidental and lamented losses, and a-  
 buses of convictions, where there is any degree  
 of the living principle: but as for such parti-  
 cular acts, they naturally tend backward and  
 not forward.

6. Did these inward convictions never put you on solemn *Vowes*? can't you remember the time, when God had confin'd you to a sickbed, or distress'd you on every side with dangers and fears, and made you to lift up your hand and swear to the living God? Remember what you promis'd or resolv'd at such and at such a time, under such an inward terror or outward affliction; if God would but pardon and spare or deliver this once; Oh! how free were you then to ingage? And can conscience bear you witness that you have not been more free to vow, than to pay your vows? Or have not these cords been as easily broken, as taken on by you? Hath not the next *Sun-shine* gotten off what the last storm made you to gird on? have you not been as loose, as carnal, as proud, as selfish, as secure, as you were before? Ah! Sirs! Is this your faithfulness to your friend? Is this your close and even walking with God, to go one step forward and three backward? Is not this to back-slide? The breach of vows and solemn resolutions is of very evil and dismal consequence, and an argument of a very strong possession of a contrary spirit. Every broken vow is a large stride back-ward, a secret bane in the heart of after resolutions, to cause their abortion, and a jealous *Caveat* in the court of heaven against future credit and acceptance. To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices

*note this*  
1st. 1. 113  
cc.  
fices



*fices to me saith the Lord, I am full of these things; when you appear before me, and spread forth your hands, and make many prayers, sometimes confessing, sometimes petitioning, sometimes vowing and protesting; but in all these dissembling and lying, for ye revolt more and more, therefore to what purpose is all this mockery? It is a trouble to me, I am weary to bear it. What ever you profess, I can't believe you: I'll never trust you more: those that never vowed and pretended, as you have done, are better to be believed, in a fairer way to treat than you: publicans and harlots go into the kingdom of heaven before you.*

7. Did you never fairly begin in the *Practice* of godliness? have you not set your hands to Gods plough, and taken up the practice of many, if not, of all known duties, nay, it may be, have manifested a singular zeal and exactness in it, either in personal or family-duties, or more publique services? forward to appear in a good cause, and stirring up of others, that were too remiss, walking at a high rate of activity for God? *Ye did run well, who did hinder you?* Whence is it that since persecution arose ye have been offended? that corporal safety is now preferred before once confessed duty? that the fear or hopes of this present world have caused you to *shift your compass*, and steer on another point? that you can so easily comply with what was once held

*Gal. 5. 7.*

as an *Abomination*? If you question whether this be to go forward or backward you may shortly know to your sorrow.

I shall wind of this doctrine now with a word or two of application.

1. This sounds a sad *Alarm* to all Back-sliders, whether persons or kingdoms, I might add here to what hath been already sayd, a whole catalogue of scriptures that look very dreadfully on this generation of men. I shall referr you but to two or three. See that known place. *Heb. 10. 38. If any man draw back my soul shall have no pleasure in him.* The words are a *Listote*, and carry in them the sharp *Emphasis* of forest indignation. q. d. my very soul shall utterly detest and abhor him. Again *Luk. 9. 62. No man having put his hand to the plough, and looking back is fit for the kingdom of God.* The Back-slider is not fit for the kingdom of grace, nor for the kingdom of glory. He hath broken his allegiance, and denyed God to be his Lord and King, and therefore God hath justly abandon'd him from all the blessed priviledge of his subjects; he hath chosen the devil for his Captain & King, and to his kingdom of darkness and wrath he doth belong. Lastly, so *Jer. 2. 19. Thine own wickedness shall correct thee and thy Back-slidings shall reprove thee; know therefore and see that it is an evil thing and bitter that thou hast forsaken the Lord thy God. As right and as pleas-*

*Use. 1.*

*not this*

sing as the ways of a Back-sliding people may be in their own eyes, they shall sooner or later know and see that the fruit is both evil and bitter. For the aggravation whereof we shall consider it in the nature of it.

1. 1. Back-sliding is a sin of the highest Ingratitude, which is one of the foulest of all aggravations. *Si ingratum dixeris, omnia dixeris.* But of all unthankful wretches in the world, the Back-slider is the most unthankful. *Do ye thus requite the Lord, O ye foolish people and unwise? Is not he thy father that hath bought thee? hath not he made thee and established thee? remember the days of old.* Deut. 32. 6, 7. Remember all the passages of thy life, from thy very conception and birth, hath not mercy and truth followed thee all thy days? who is it that hath cared for thee, that hath fed and clothed and protected thee? from how many thousands of seen, and ten thousands of unseen dangers hast thou been delivered? And dost thou thus requite the Lord? &c.

There are these five or six things especially that tend to the aggravation of the Back-sliders unthankfulness.

2. 1. He had the choicest provision made for him. The very best that the wisdom, riches and beauty of heaven it self could provide. *Behold I have prepared my dinner, my oxen and my fatlings are killed and all things are ready.* Matth. 22. 4. *And in this mountain [of the church]*

church ] *shall the Lord of hosts* [ in the days of the gospel ] *make unto all people a feast of fat things, a feast of wines on the lees, of fat things full of marrow, of wines on the lees well refined.* *Hsa.* 25. 6. He giveth not onely life and breath; but spared not his own son, and with him hath freely given all things. Here is both dainty & plenty; Christ and all things freely with him. Oh! what a mercy is Christ! the epitome & fountain of all other mercies; *in whom all the promises of God are yea and amen.* The elect and precious stone. The desire of all nations; whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation, through faith in his blood. The onely living bread. The undefiled lamb of God. Do men use to deal thus with their servants? To eat of the best, and drink of the best, to feed on their masters own dish; nay, on their master himself, *Job.* 6. 55. For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. To cloath them with *Robes* of state, and deck them with *Rings* and jewels of gold; and make them free of all immunities and priviledges that belong to the sons of kings? Is not this wretch well enough to pass? hath he any cause to complain? Is it not fair that the servant be as his master? nay, it may be in many respects better accommodated, as to men, than ever his master, in this world was? It is but ask and have, whatever is in the house, is at his service, nothing accounted too good for him. What would he

*Mat.* 17. 25.  
*Rom.* 8. 32.

*1 Cor.* 1. 20.  
*1 Pet.* 2. 6, 7.  
*Hagg.* 2. 7.  
*Rom.* 3. 25.

*Luk.* 15. 25.  
23.

*Luk.* 6. 40.  
*Matth.* 8. 20.  
*Joh.* 15. 7.  
*1 Cor.* 3. 23.

have? Is not heaven and earth able to content him? must he needs go to the devil to mend his condition? and to the world for an almes? to hell for ease, to the devils gallies for honour, and to his stinking dungeon for liberty and content? Oh! the preposterous madness! the flagitious wickedness! the cursed unreasonableness of an unthankful, back-sliding heart! Is there not enough in the covenant of grace to endow so unworthy a miscreant? what so full and glorious a complication of the wonders of divine grace and love, did there ever concur in any one thing, that ever angels or men heard of? Not onely an act of grace, but a covenant of free grace, free, not onely as to the contract it self, but as to the contents and substance of it, which the very angels seem to be ambitious to peep into, *1 Pet. i. 12.* ὁμοψύχῳ ὡς ἡμεῖς, are all on end to pry into, as a prying maid longs with admiration to peep into the rich cabinet of her ladies choicest jewels. A covenant, wherein the creator is freely, fully and for ever made over to the creature, with all that heaven it self can contribute to his happiness. The bounty and glory of the father: the love, wisdom, power, merits, righteousness and inheritance of the Son. The comforts, counsels and communion of the holy spirit. Oh! what iniquity hast thou, or thy fathers found in God? tell me, thou luke warm apostate! did he wrong thee, when he

pittied

*Jer. 22. 3.*



pittied thy undone case, and sent his onely Son on purpose to ransom and save thee? did Christ wrong thee, when he offer'd to suffer & obey & bleed and dy for thee, which none in heaven or earth beside would or could have done? hath the Holy Ghost wrong'd thee, in waiting thus long upon thee, to wo and solicit thee for thy good? did he abuse thee, that he had not taken thy first denial, and never made thee one motion more? art thou abus'd, in that God of his tender compassion shews such unwillingness that thou shouldst for ever ly in hell with the devil and his angels? O shameless unthankfulness! hath the unsearchable wisdom and love of God, from all eternity contriv'd so free, so honourable, so easy and so sure a way for thy deliverance from those insufferable torments and hellish miseries, thou willfully plung'd'st thy self into; hath he sent his messengers, rising early, with care and joy, to treat with thee on this very business; didst thou seem to be so taken with the offers a while, and so forward to ingage thy self whereby thou mad'st us to rejoyce over thee, and to bless God for thee; and is all come to this now? must this be the unhappy fruit of all our prayers and tears and studies and arguments? Is this thy kindness to thy teachers? Is this thy faithfulness to thy once avowed principles? vile clay! how dardest thou thus mock with thy maker? I adjure thee in the name of that

God, whom thou hast despised, to answer this impious contempt of his authority and grace in that great day of retribution, before his righteous and high tribunal.

2. *2. He had the easiest and most honourable work expected of him.* Let all the world judge, if they have not utterly repudiated and abhorred their reason? *What doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?* Micb. 6. 8. Is this such hard work! suppose you had a servant, that expected the greatest wages, that ever you gave a servant in your lives, or could well give, and far above what any other, either would or could; yet nothing requir'd of this servant but to love and reverence his master, and to walk honestly and friendly with all others, would you not be ready to curse such an one, for an unthankful villain, that should complain, your service were too hard for him? Is it such a task to live righteously, soberly and godly? such a burden to be an honest man?

'Tis true, the scripture doth often set forth the work of a Christian by such metaphores, as intimate the difficulty and labour of it; and the people of God themselves are sometimes ready to cry out. *This is an hard saying*, and to complain of *Lyons* and *Mountains* in their way; but whence comes this to pass? not from the weight of the work, but from the willful

*Job. 6. 60.*

*Mal. 77. 10.*

weakness of the workman. *I sayd this is my*

*infirm-*

*infirmity.* 'Tis hard to be a Christian, because 'tis so hard to deny self. Indeed here are strong inclinations of nature to be resisted, violent temptations to be overcome, unwearied enemies to be watch't and wrestled with hard measure from the world to be put up with patience, whatsoever is near or dear; when God requires it, must be chearfully sacrific'd in witness to the truth. This is hard work you'll say: 'Tis true, *no chastening for the present seemeth to be joyous, but grievous*, and observe, it doth but *seem* to be so, grievous indeed to the flesh, but 'tis onely for the present; *nevertheless afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteousness unto them which are exercised thereby.* Ask any of the saints of God, even those, whose conditions in the world seem to be saddest, pick out the sons and daughters of affliction, and ask them, whether they find any reason to complain of the hardness of their work, though the chastisement be not joyous in it self, yet there is that mixt with it, that makes it so. Here is the unparallel'd compassion of our heavenly Lord and master, that whatever service he calls to, he is with his servants, not onely to oversee them, but *συναντιλαμβάνειν* to help together with them, yea, to perform all their works in and for them. Wherefore the Apostle concludes. *I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.* Is not that work easy enough

*Heb. 12. 12.*

*Heb. 10. 34.*

*Phil. 2. 13.  
Chap. 4. 13.*

that is done for you? Hath Satan, or the world any such service? possibly such as may please the flesh better, as an evil truant, that had rather cripple himself at play, than take the tenth part of that pain in an honest Employment. I have heard of a drunkard, that in his staggering, tumbling, vomiting, bestiall fits, cryed out once in mock-complaint, or in jest-earnest. *Little do you that were never drunk, know what paines we poor drunkards take.* Yet all those paines are pleasant; these yokes don't gall; these burdens are not felt. *Nullum elementum in suo loco ponderat*, and no work so distasts them, as the work of God; no work so intolerable as his, whose *ways are ways of pleasantness and all whose paths are peace*; No calling so dishonourable, as the holy and high calling of a Christian; no such disparagement again, as to be servant to the king of kings. These are they whom Christ speakes of, *Mar. 8. 38.* That are ashamed of him and of his words. Methinks it is strange, that men should be ashamed of their glory, while they can glory in their shame. Ashamed to pray, but not ashamed to swear; ashamed to wash, but not ashamed to wallow; ashamed to praise the Lord, but not ashamed to blaspheme him: ashamed of God, but not ashamed of the devil, and afraid of suffering, but not afraid of damnation, afraid to own Christ, but not afraid to persecute him. I might here

20h Hnd

Pro. 3. 17.

at large display the honour of a Christians work, as much as it is despised by those that pretend to honour. Is the honour of relation any thing? shew me such an honour as this is. Is not thine earthly Prince the fountain of that honour thou boastest of? but will thy Prince make thee his son, or his daughter? or if he should, hath he an imperial crown for thee; or if he had, hath he a heaven for thee? hath he angels (far more glorious creatures than himself) to command and appoint for thine attendants? hath he an eternity to entayl on thee? Alas! how great is the disparagement, to compare heaven with a dung-hill! God with a creature! Is there honour in parentage? these are the children of the most high. Is there honour in valour and victory? here are the *eternall* more than conquerors. Is there honour in wisdom? These are wisdoms children, the wise merchants, the wise virgins. Those that honour God shall be honour'd of him, yea, eternally honour'd with him, he will put his own honour upon them, and honour shall uphold the humble in spirit. This was the new sang of the four and twenty elders Rev. 5. 9, 10. *Thou wast slain and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood - - And hast made us unto our God Kings and Priests, and we shall reign on the earth.* The servant of the Lord, was the highest title of honour, that David was capable of, and that, a far more glorious stile

*Heb. 1. 14.*

*Rom. 8. 37.*

*1 Sam. 2. 30.*

*Joh. 17. 24.*

*Exek. 16. 14.*

*Pro. 29. 23.*

*Non reputo  
magnum quod  
Deo servus,  
sed maximum  
reputo, quod  
ipse dignatus  
se in servum  
assumere.  
Bern.*



than *Alexanders Ille Magnus*. But it seems the Back-slider is of another mind, wherefore if nothing else will do, we shall refer him to that last day, which shall surely open his blind eyes.

3. 3. *He had the highest wages (though conditionally, yet) freely enser'd to him.* You have had a short and cold taste of some of the saints wages in this life: his accommodations in his work, though not the thousandth part of what they experimentally find; yet as large as it is, this being mixt with such imperfections, is but their hell in comparison of their wages; should I undertake to give you an account of what is reserv'd for the saints in the other world, I can only tell you, no tongue can tell. 'Tis no bag of gold, nor stinted sum of silver, these are but *σκυβαλα* dirt and dogs-meat. 'Tis not a Knighthood; an empty title, which is but a flower, that quickly withers and stinkes; but 'tis an inheritance, not a copie for two or three uncertain fraile lives; not a lease for a thousand, no nor for ten thousand years; but an eternal inheritance; and an inheritance of what? not of some small cottage among the sons of men, not of a farm, not of a manour, not of a thousand, nor of twenty thousand *per annum*. Though the tenth part of this would make thy carnal heart leap within thee for joy; but 'tis a kingdom, not a kingdom that extends from *Barwick* to the *Mount*, nor from one end of the earth to the other, but from one end

end of heaven to the other. A kingdom, not of wars and tumults and discontented subjects, but a kingdom of peace, not a kingdom on earth, which is but one storie above a dungeon; but the kingdom of heaven; not a kingdom that must live on the heavy exactions of poor subjects; but where every one hath more than enough in his own *Exchequer*. But alas! what can man think! what can one of the least of men write, of that which passeth all humane knowledge or imagination? Let me now in Gods stead, a little expostulate the case with thee; thou expectest great wages for thy work, and great accommodations in thy work, but what art thou able to do to deserve all this? would not this be thy first question in a case of thy own? Should not thy servants work be some way proportionable to his wages? wilt thou expend thy whole estate on a parcel of servants, that can do nothing for thee, but help to devour what thou hast? wouldst thou not fain sit on thy masters right hand, or on his left in his kingdom? Is it not reason then that thou shouldst drink of his cup, and be baptiz'd with his baptism? canst thou for shame think to reign with him, when thou wilt not suffer with him? dost thou count to triumph with him in heaven, and yet forsake him, it may be oppose him, on earth? I would not be of those that should grudge thee thy *Penny*, though thou hadst wrought but the last

*Tantum fin-  
gulus quan-  
tum univer-  
sus.*

last hour; but canst thou expect thy wages, when thou refuselt thy work? It may be thou thinkest that thou hast done something, when time and opportunity served thee, though now thou darest not do as once thou didst; yet thy heart is as good as ever. Indeed it may be so, where note, that thou could'st have denied thy master long ago, had opportunities serv'd thee, thy heart would have done it then, as well as now, for thou confessest it is as good now as ever. But hast thou indeed been in the vineyard? there needs no other to accuse thee; is not this the very thing that God charges thee with? thou hast set thy hand to his plough, and now lookest back. Had it not been a thousand times better thou had'st never known the way of righteousness? turn to that 18 of *Ezek.* 24, 25, 26. and charge God with inequality if thou darest. What hath all thy righteousness profited him? Is there any merit in what thou hast done? Or suppose there were (which yet is not to be supposed) is not God long ago out of this debt? compare thy receipts with thy service, but take heed of writing fifty for an hundred; make a just account, and tell me what it is that thy Lord doth in justice owe thee; wilt thou here speak after blasphemous *Rome*, or after *Christ*? who hath taught thee to say, *when ye have done all things that are commanded, ye are unprofitable servants.* *Luk.* 17. 10. But hast thou done all things

*Note this*

*Luk.* 16. 6.

things that are commanded? dar'st thou say-so? dar'st thou think so? *num eo impudentie ventum est?* Put all thy righteousness together, will it amount to the worth of one crumb of bread? of one minute of time? or the least rag on thy back? Art thou better than our father *Jacob*, who confest himself not worthy of the least of all Gods mercies? *Gen. 32. 10.* O then be asham'd and blush at thy unthankfulness in despising the infinite riches of his grace. 4.

4. *He had the grossest provocations freely pardon'd him, at least the pardon freely tender'd him.* Methink the sence of pardoning mercy should be effectual to ingage the soul for ever, in the returns of gratitude and obedience, if there were any sparks of common ingenuity left. Here's a full and a free pardon offer'd; a royal act of indemnity past and proclaim'd, none excluded, but those that exclude themselves. Had he been a *Manasseh*, a *Magdalen*, a *Saul*, an idolater, a blasphemmer, a drunkard, an adulterer, a murderer, a persecuter, a forcerer. had he been an *Abab*, an *Antiochus*, a *Herod*, a *Demas* or a *Judas*, had his sins been dipt in the deepest crimson, that in this life they are capable of, yet all this should have been blotted out as a cloud, and done away for ever, had he not wilfully refus'd his own mercy, nothing could have hindred, or have null'd his absolute discharge, but his own contempt. Possibly some may think that I should

should here have excepted the sin against the holy Ghost, seeing Christ tells us expressly, *It shall not be forgiven, neither in this world, nor in the world to come. Matth. 12. 32.* I dare not question the truth of what Christ hath spoken, no, nor the equity and righteousness of what God hath done or determined to do. I know it shall never be forgiven. But whence comes it to pass? Is it for want of sufficiency in the merits of Christ? that were foul blasphemy. Is it because of Gods decree not to pardon? that were to make God guilty of all the sin in the world. Is it for want of power in God? that were to deny him to be God. Is it for want of mercy? that were to make him finite. Is it any thing at all in God, or Christ? then man's destruction were not, both first and last, of himself. No, it proceeds from the nature of the sin; they cannot repent, I say, they cannot, that is, they will not; therefore they cannot be forgiven. But we shall have occasion to speak more directly concerning this sin by & by; that which I have at present to do is to aggravate the Back-sliders unthankfulness, in sinning against the gracious offers of an universal pardon. *Ho every one that thirsteth, &c. Isa. 55. 1. For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. Joh. 3. 16. Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be white as snow,*



snow, though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Isa. 1. 18. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound. Rom. 5. 20. And him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out. Joh. 6. 37. Is not this enough? Oh! what doth the ungrateful wretch think of himself? come let us reason together, says God; if thou art but capable of common reason, there is some hope, let us sit down and reason the case then, and see who is in the fault, I or thou. Remember, while thou wert in my vineyard, what didst thou want? didst thou find me a hard master? didst thou serve me for nought? Look round about thee upon every thing thou hast in the world; that thou canst call thy own, thy life, thy liberty, thy health, thy friends, thy estate, thy peace and every particular of them, whose are all these? and whence are they? *And if* 2 Sam. 11.8. *that had been too little I would moreover have given unto thee such and such things.* Again, remember how thou hast carried thy self towards me ever since thou wert born, both before and since thou first pretendedst any acquaintance with me. How unwillingly wert thou ever wont to go about my work, unless thy own intrest were concern'd in it? and how deceitfully! seeking and serving thy self, when thou wouldst have the world think thou wert serving me? how often hast thou dishonour'd me and mockt me to my face? Let thy

thy own conscience witness how thou hast carried thy self towards me from time to time, that had not my patience been infinite, I had never forborn thee hitherto, I will appeal but to thy own prayers and confessions, thy own mouth shall be my witness concerning thy deserts towards me; yet whatever thy provocations had been, thou should'st have known that I was God and not man, I would for ever have acquitted and discharg'd thee of all thy sins, and justified thee freely by the righteousness of my own son; all thy transgressions should have been as if they had never been, thou should'st have had no need to fear; as I am faithful and just I would have forgiven thee. But all this was not worth thanks with thee on the terms on which it was offer'd; pardon of sin, it may be, thou couldst like well enough, but to part with sin, thou could'st not endure to think of; but wouldst rather chuse to run the risk on't, whatever were the issue. Sirs! suppose your earthly prince had a capital quarrel against you, and the sentence of death past on you, whither justly or wrongfully, would you not thankfully accept of your princes pardon, nay, would you account it too dear, if all that you have in the world might but purchase it? why! are your lives worth thanks, and are not your souls? or is man's pardon more worth than God's? suppose you were now arraign'd at the

the bar of Gods judgment (as shortly you must, and long ago you might have been) & I should see the dreadful mouth of hell open for you, and legions of devils waiting and gaping for their miserable prey, would a pardon be as little worth with you then, as 'tis now? would not the least drop of that blood you now despise, be then welcome, if the terms were but possible, though never so difficult? Well sinner! if thou art resolv'd to kick against the bowels of pardoning grace, if thou wilt trample on the love of a bleeding Saviour, if thou wilt challenge the full quiver of the almighty, and rush on the thick bosses of his buckler; what shall I say to thee, but as *Michaiah* once to *Ahab*; Go, and prosper.

5. *He hath the greatest patience daily exercised towards him.* Ah sinner! 'tis well that thou hast had to do with God, had his power been in the hand of one of thy fellow creatures, thou hadst felt the weight of it long ago, the greater the provocation, the greater the patience that beares with it, but none in the world provoke God as the Back-slider doth; to sin against patience & such patience as Gods is, is none of the least aggravations of unthankfulness.

2. 'Tis a sin of the highest *Dis honour* to God. The Back-slider, as hath been said, is a covenant-breaker, a *Renegado*, a runaway-servant, one that once belong'd to the family of Christ, but now hath disown'd and de-

1 King. 22  
15.

*m. R. Hops  
Leford No.*

serted it, at least practically and in part, but of all the miscarriages, whereby God is dishonour'd, there are none that so immediately reflect on him, as those of his own family; this opens the mouths of his enemies to reproach him: those that are glad to hear or see any thing amiss by the *Household of faith*, or any that pretend a special relation to it, any mischief on, or miscarriage in the church of Christ is an occasion of derision and blasphemy. The devil is wont to rejoyce at the churches loss or disgraces; therefore tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon, lest the daughters of the Philistims rejoyce, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. 2 Sam. 1. 20. Ah Sirs! 'tis sport enough for the devil and his imps, to see the servants of Christ run from him, especially in times of service, when they should be closest to him. As there is joy in heaven at the conversion of a sinner, so there is joy in hell at the subversion of a Professor. Prodigal children are a disgrace, as well as a grief, to their parents, a disparagement to their family and education, *A child left to himself bringeth his mother to shame.* Pro. 29. 15. How very tender hath God always been of his own glory, and the honour of his family? He would not sometimes so much as correct them, that his enemies should see it, and laugh at them. *I wrought for my names sake, that it should not be polluted before the heathen.* Ezek. 20. 8, 9.

I could

I could easily have made them smart for their evil ways, I have had provocations enough, and had surely done it, had not my heathen enemies been by, who would have rejoiced, blasphemed and insulted too proudly over my heritage; is God so tender of his honour, as to forbear that which is just and righteous for its sake, and shall not we forbear that which is wicked and unjust, shall God deny himself that which is due to his justice, and shall not we deny our selves that which is destructive to our own souls for it? Several ways this sin reflects on the honour of God.

1. *It is most gross idolatry.* For he that departs from God, departs for the sake of some thing, which he esteems to be better, which ordinarily is the good of this present world; or some unclean lust of the flesh, which is worse. But for men to deify the dirty gods of the earth, which God hath given them to tread under their feet; and to adore them with that affection and trust, which is due onely to their maker, is most shameful idolatry. *Jobn* tells us of a wonder in heaven, *Rev.*

12. 1. *A woman cloathed with the sun, and the moon under her feet:* invert the order of the words, and it will sute the monster we are here speaking of, that tramples under feet the sun of righteousness, and decks and prides himself with the unconstant moon-like vanities of this lower world; that sets earth above heaven,



heaven, and God below some of the vilest of his creatures. Idolatry strikes at the very being of God. The fool hath said in his heart there is no God, he says so because he would have it so. Sirs? would you indeed that there were no other God, but this vain world? could you find it in your hearts to proclaim *Mammon* Lord and King? Dare you abandon your hope in Christ, and renounce your allegiance to the God of heaven? will you set up your standard and bid defiance to Jehovah under the displayed banner of his idol of clay?

1. consider,

*1. How contrary is this to the natural dictates of your own judgments and reason?* Do but seriously consult your own reason; hath not God a witness within you? can you go on smoothly here? are there no secret stabs and wounds now and then, that you are forc'd, with much ado, to dissemble, and harden your selves against? don't your own judgments and consciences sometimes startle you with their vexing queries, and terrifying intimations, *the fool hath said in his heart*, not from his heart, he doth but belie his own judgment.

*In cord, now  
ex cord.*

*2. How contrary is it to your open profession?* How often have you freely confest, that the world, in the fulness and Glory of it, is not worthy to be compar'd with God, that there is nothing in it that can make a soul happy, mere dung and dross in comparison of Christ? and that

that to prize the world above its due worth, or to seek it before the great concerns of Gods Glory, and the spiritual and eternal interest of the soul to commit idolatry with it? hath not this been your profession?

3. *How contrary to your own Prayers?* How 3. freely and frequently have your tongues run out in reviling and setting at nought the world, while it may be Satan hath been at your right hands, laughing to have your tongues act their part? with what elegancy of expression, and histrionical passions you could renounce and vilify that, which you all while lov'd as your very lives? It may be you have never come on your knees, but that you have been ready to fall foul with it, confessing that covetousness is idolatry, and the love of money the root of all evil; how zealous have you been to ascribe honour and blessing and greatness to God alone, and to advance him over all, and to acknowledge your happiness to be wholly from and in him? have you never, with hands lifted up, told him that you prefer a Christ, yea, a persecuted, scorned, despised Christ before all the crowns and dignities in the world.

4. *How contrary to your vows and cove-* 4. *nants?* Do you not still own your baptism, wherein you convened to be the Lords, renouncing the world, the flesh and the devil? Is not this vow upon you, besides those

private and occasional protestations that have past since?

5. 5. Lastly, *How contrary to your own experience?* Hath the world never abus'd your hopes, and deceiv'd your expectations? can't your own experience write both vanity and vexation on it? have you not found your idols to be *lying vanities*? doth not every day meet you with some disappointments, either in your greater or lesser concernments? are you not ready sometimes to cry out that you are weary of it? And yet after all this, to set it up in your affections above God, and to chuse it for your happiness before God, and wickedly to deny and oppose him for the sake of it, is such madness, that methink a rational creature should be ashamed of.

2. 2. *It is a most false and ignominious slander?* He tells the world, that what boasts soever some may make of Christ, he hath tryed, and therefore can assure them, that *Mammon* or *Satan* are better masters than he; their work better work, and their wages better wages; that men were better please themselves than go about to please one that is not to be pleas'd; that the liberty of the flesh is to be prefer'd before the priviledges of the sons of God; as strangely as the man looks on this now, he will one day be forc'd to own it, as the proper language of his way. But to this purpose already.

3. *He charges God with injustice and unmercifulness.* And can there be a greater dishonour and affront to the righteous and merciful God? *What iniquity have your fathers found in me, that they are gone far from me?* Jer. 22. 5. where note, that to go from him is to charge him with iniquity. *O my people what have I done unto thee? wherein have I wearied thee? testify against me.* Mich. 6. 3. Wherein have I wronged, or dealt hardly or unjustly with thee? wilt thou condemn me without evidence? Is it not intolerable wickedness to accuse him for an hard master, whose name is the Lord God gracious and merciful long-suffering and abundant in goodness and truth? Exod. 34. 6. whose nature and delight it is to do good and shew mercy, it is in effect to call him devil, for that's the devils nature and image, and are the tongues of men capable of fouler blasphemy than this? can they cast greater dishonour on him.

3. *It is a sin of the greatest folly and madness.* 3. Therefore 'tis call'd a turning again to folly. Psal. 85. 8. The Back-slider is a fool, one that knows not when he is well, that exchanges a fountain for a cistern, yea living fountain for a leaking cistern, an immortal crown for a gilded rattle, an inheritance for a mess of unflavoury pottage. Jer. 2. 12. Methink I should not need to say any more to shew you the folly of it, than what hath been already sayd; yet let me

add a word or two, consider the greatness of his folly.

1. 1. *In the madness of his choice.* He chuses that which is most unlikely to do him good, that which he confesses to be vanity, & worse than vanity; which he hath been told, and, it may be, convinc'd, that it will undo him; and all to please the veriest enemy, that he hath in the world. Oh! what wisdom is this for men to forsake God and damn their own souls for fear of displeasing the devil, or the times they live in?

2. 2. *In the sadness of his loss.* To instance but in these two things, of many,

1. *He looses all that hath been wrought in him;* at least, as he goes on to back-slide, he is loosing it more & more, he spends on his stock, as it were, or rather spends his very stock, which is not like to hold him long: every day makes some wast, he is growing poor apace; his spiritual estate is melting away, like snow before the sun, and so he falls insensibly into decay; till at last (without a wonder of preventing mercy) he be quite broken and you. He looses his faith, his zeal, his love, his hope, his fear, his tenderness of conscience, & his hopeful evidences for a better life. But mistake me not, I have not forgotten what was before asserted and prov'd in opposition to the *Arminian* faith; there are two sorts of grace in the world, *Real* and *Counterfeit*, and consequently, two sorts of Back-

sliders.



sliders, true grace may be lost gradually; counterfeit grace wholly. And is not this spiritual madness, for a man to set himself to pull down God's work in his soul, to counterwork the spirit of grace, and to render the hopeful beginnings of the new creature of none effect?

2. *He loseth all that he hath done or suffered.* 2.

*When the righteous turneth away from his righteousness, and committeth iniquity, and doth according to all the abominations that the wicked man doth, shall he live? all his righteousness that he hath done shall not be mentioned, in his trespass that he hath trespassed, and in his sin that he hath sinned, in them shall he dy.* Ezek. 18. 22.

What duties or difficulties soever the righteous are call'd to, God is with them to own them in it, to support them under it, to pity, deliver and carry them thorow it, and to reward them at last. But all that the Back-slider hath done or suffer'd is lost, God looks upon it as nothing, it shall not be so much as mention'd.

*Have we not professed in thy name? and in thy name have cast out devils? and in thy name have done many wonderful works? yea and for thy name have suffer'd reproach and scorn and persecution. It may be so, and what then? I had rather ye had never pretended to any such thing, nor taken the profession of my name in vain. I have had too many such servants, that have wrought for their pleasure, or shewn*

their valour for a spurt, and then run away; I would they had never come near me, they have done my cause far more harm than good. Ah! how miserably will the poor wretch be disappointed, when after his great hopes & boasts, all his duties and sufferings shall be so far from comforting or advantaging him, that they shall but aggravate his condemnation. Alas! for thee, that thou hast been so long tugging and droyling from duty to duty, and from ordinance to ordinance, past under so many sharp gripes and throws of conviction, & the secret stabs of an awakened conscience, the threatening frowns of the world, and it may be the cruel barrows of the sons of violence, hast vex'd thy flesh in denying it that ease or pleasure or interest, that thy carnal heart hath been even sick for, and hast been not far from the kingdom of heaven, hast beaten through so much hard work and bad way, and yet at last must loose all for lack of holding out one stride or two further. Alas for thee! If thy plowed ground must at last ly fallow, and thy fenced vineyard be let out to a wilderness, it will henceforth be further from a vineyard than ever.

4. *It is a sin of the highest provocation.* If a child, a darling prove a prodigal, and abuse his parents love and care, and run from them, it even breakes their hearts, there cannot a greater cross befall them. *Hear o heavens! and*

*give*

give ear to earth! for the Lord hath spoken. See with what strange *Apostrophes* he begins, as it were, to open his griefs, and to ease his burdened heart to the heavens and to the earth. *I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me.* Isa. 1, 2. *Ah sinful nation! a people laden with iniquity, a seed of evil doers, children that are corrupters, they have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked the holy one of Israel to anger, they are gone away backward.* ver. 4. Do but seriously make it your own case. Suppose you had set your heart on a poor child, that had nothing in all the earth to inherit, but the miseries and slaveries of the world, cripp'd and broken in ever limb, never like to do you any real service, whereby you might be profited; suppose you had adopted such a one, out of mere pity, to be as a child of your own, and taken him into your bosoms, be thinking no pains, care or cost on him to nourish and tutour him, placing some of your choicest delight and hopes on him, admitting him fellow heir with your own son, delighting to be call'd his father, should this creature now, after a tractable and hopeful child-hood and youth, begin to flight and despise you, or to revile and curse you to your face, and defie and disown you, and chuse his companions among the scum and brothels of the earth ready to do you a mischief, according to his power, on the least occasion, and that in  
despight

despight of reproof and fatherly admonitions and gentle corrections, and long sufferance; would not such a child both grieve and provoke you? would you not account that your highest indignation against such a miscreant were just? Ah Sirs! can you find in your hearts to deal thus with God then?

5. 5. *It is a sin of the greatest cruelty and injustice.* Besides the injustice & wrong that it offers to God, and to a man's own soul.

1. 1 *It is the greatest cruelty you can exercise towards your brethren.* Example is one of the strongest attractives among men, either to convert or to pervert, to stablish or to stagger others. But this is the pernicious influence of the Back-sliders example, as was said before. He spreads a net for his brothers soul, were it but a consumption, that might prove mortal to himself onely, it were not so much; but it is a *plague of leprosy*, there is a contagion in it. Significant is that Scripture *Metaphore* that calls us sheep, if one leap over the hedge, all the flock will follow, though inevitable death be on the other side. How many thousands are there in the world, that have in the general an honest aim to the truth, but weak in the head, and led by mans example, rather than by Gods rule? by this means the back-sliding spirit becomes so dangerous, like that *red dragon*, that drew the third part of the stars to the earth with his tayl. One *Renegado* does more

more mischief than ten profest enemies. The Back-slider is like money ( that idol, which for the most part he adores ) which ( they say ) is one of the worst things in times of pestilence, to carry the infection. Nay, ordinarily they do not propagate their sin by bare example; but by their fair pretences of reason and scripture, whereby they would vindicate themselves and their cause, with the authority of religion, and those subtil distinctions, that the devil prompts them with, they speak fair words, but their very breath poysons the air. They are like *Dauids* enemy? *His words* *Psal. 55. 21.*  
*were saster than oyl, yet were they drawn swords.* Such friends and counsellours, as was *Job's* wife, who bade him *curse God and die.* The ready way to get rid of present misery, but a sad kind of preparative for another world. 'Tis but this or this; and why shall we expose our selves, and all that is dear to us in the world to the spoyl and the rage of men, for matters of question and controversie? we must be rul'd by our Governours and teachers, and do as our religious forefathers have done. *By good words and fair speeches they deceive the heart of the simple.* *Rom. 16. 18.* Sirs! dare you answer the guilt of blood? even the blood of souls! ô pittty! pittty your selves, and those your brethren that are like to perish with and by you.

2. *It is the greatest wrong and cruelty that you 2.*



can offer your faithful teachers; whose heart, desire and earnest prayer to God for you is, to present you blameless before the father at last, that they might be able in their measure to say, with the great Shepherd of the sheep. *Job. 17. 12. Those thou gavest us we have kept and none of them are lost, but the sons of perdition. For now we live, if ye stand fast in the Lord. 1 Thess. 3. 8.* Ah Sirs! 'tis death to your poor Ministers to see you shaken and falling off, like untimely fruit. You little think, it may be how dear you are to those, that travel in birth with you, till Christ be formed and confirmed in you. I trust I can say it without boasting, hypocrisy or flattery, I had rather be the instrument of your salvation, than the Emperour of all the dominions of the earth, might I take my choice. I say the instrument, not of a faction or partie, not of any unnecessary separation, or sinful schism among you, but of bringing you unto and confirming you under the great Shepherd and supream bishop of your souls in order to your salvation. *For what is our hope, or joy, or crown of rejoicing? are not even ye in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ at his coming? for ye (if ye stand fast) are our glory and joy. 1 Thess. 2. 19, 20.* But if not, our shame and grief: Ah! do not so evilly requite our love, as to kill us by denying us the comfort of our lives. Remember every Backslider is a murderer, a self murderer, and every

visible

visible act of apostasy a stab at the heart of the faithful Minister; ô pity your selves; spare your own lives, and spare ours too. Send us not to our graves mourning over you, after all our care and hopes of you wherein have we wronged you, that we should be so vile in your eyes? whose ox have we taken? or whose ass have we taken? whom have we defrauded? or whom have we oppressed? yea, or whom have we seduced? for whom have we studied, and prayed, and laboured night and day? denied our ease, undone our bodily health, and suffered the loss of all things; but for you? and will you be so far now from pitying us, that even your hands should commit cruelty on us. *2. οὐ τένον* must you, our children, be our executioners? Is this the honour, the love, the thanks you owe us? you once call'd us your fathers, and boasted of what God had done for your souls by us; how are we now become your enemies? did we beget you to the corruptions of the times, or to Christ? The Lord judge between us!

6. Lastly, *It is a sin of the saddest consequence.* What was that so often sold Israel into the hands of the *Robbers*, and delivered them up to those desolating judgments, which we read of in sacred history? where do you find that they ever meddl'd with their neighbours idols, but that God made those very neighbours their plagues? what was that remov'd

6.

*read and  
Consider*

the

Rev. 2. 4. 5.

the candlestick from *Ephesus*? oh that the present generations were some wise, as to consider the things that are written for their warning. But to apply my self more individually; have you never heard of an unpardonable sin? and have you seriously consider'd what it is? Are you willing then to sink your souls under the guilt of it? And now being fallen on this discourse give one leave to digress a little, that I may the more freely give you my thoughts concerning the true nature and right definition of this sin.

Str. Ref.  
par. 2. cap. 4.  
b. 5. P. 234.

2. Mr. Baxter in his *Strs. Rest*, gives us this definition or description (or what you will) of it. *When men will not believe that Jesus is the Christ, though they are convinc'd by undeniable arguments of the miracles which both himself and his Disciples wrought, and in the page before, that it is when men will not be convinc'd by miracles that Jesus is the Christ.* With which I must crave his leave to profess my dissatisfaction, yet without any conceived prejudice against the person or his excellent treatise, which are rather for our admiration than our emulation. Nor yet dare I utterly explode that, which hath been more generally received, to imbrace what he himself confesses to be novel. The grounds of our dissatisfaction are these,

- I. If not to believe that Jesus is the Christ, it being confirm'd by miracles, be the sin against the Holy-Ghost, then it either concludes

cludes thoses onely to be guilty, who were eye & ear-witness to these miracles; and all others both before & since are free, which he denies, or

2. It takes in all those that have ever heard 2. of them, and yet have not been convinc'd that these are sufficient to prove him to be the true *Messias*, for so he says, *When men will not be convinc'd by miracles that Jesus is the Christ*. And how great a part of the unbelieving world, both *Mahometans*, *Jews* and *Heathens*, must he needs draw into this tremendous guilt? All must be condemn'd that, either can't be satisfyed in the truth or reallity of the matter of fact, on the testimony of humane record, or that are not convinc'd that the records of scripture are sacred & infallible, or those that cannot tell, but that as great works as these, may be done by the power of Satan, or supposing them to be wrought of God, yet cannot be convinc'd that their end is to prove him to be the Christ, and therefore cannot give up their full assent, and consent to him, though they have been so far convinc'd, that they dare not challenge the argument of miracles in dispute, yet they are not fully perswaded, but seem to themselves to have some surer ground; in something else, to fix on. This I hope Mr. B. would confess were harsh sentencs, especially considering what the fearful consequences of this sin are, I dare not think, that such

P may

may be pardon'd, and ought to be pray'd for, which he must deny them, when he hath prov'd them guilty of his indictment.

3. I conclude hence that his definition is *not adaequata definitio*, or rather, that it erres

*in genere*. (1.) The Genus hereof he makes to be an *historical unbelief*, or want of an historical faith. 'Tis true, unbelief is a very comprehensive terme, and the root, either proximately, or more remotely of all other sins; yee, if all other sins should be defin'd by this, I think the *Logick* would not please him. (2.) He seems to suppose that a person may commit this sin, that was never enlighten'd; for he allows (if any) onely a kind of conviction that comes short of an historical faith; but

I think it will appear from scripture, that this sin is mostly to be found among such, as have been historically convinced, and profess that Jesus is the Christ.

It follows then that we consider what the scripture saith of this sin. *Mark* says, he that shall blaspheme against the holy Ghost hath never forgiveness. Chap. 3. 29. *Matthew* expresses it two ways. The blasphemy of the Spirit. Chap. 12. 31. And whosoever speaketh against the holy Ghost, he shall have no pardon. Those may serve one generally, to each other. That men might not think that every word spoken



against the holy Spirit is that unpardonable sin he seems to anticipate the mistake, *all sin & blasphemy shall be forgiven unto men, but the blasphemy of the Spirit* (as the words nakedly ly in the original) *shall not be forgiven unto men.* Now what is this blasphemy of the Spirit, or against the Spirit, as we translate it? take it actively or passively, it comes all to one, surely it cannot be the bare speaking of a word, whereby the holy Spirit may be reproached or dishonoured; for thus it would include all sins in word, yea, and blasphemy being not onely predicated of words, but also of thoughts and actions, it would comprehend all sins whatsoever, for every sin is *virtually* a blaspheming of God, and he that blasphemeth God doth therein blaspheme the holy Ghost. *Mark* seems to expresse it more particularly, *chap. 3. 30. Because they said he hath an unclean spirit.* This may be taken as the occasion of Christ's Doctrine concerning this sin, they accused him of an unclean spirit, thence he takes occasion to warn them of the danger of this sin against the holy Ghost. Or else take it in all its aggravations, and the principles from which it proceeded, and we will grant it for one instance of the sin. Questionless, there were many of those that said so, and more of those that verily thought so, who afterward found mercy; But this blasphemy of, or against the Spirit, is the willfull contempt and mali-

cious opposition of the holy Spirit in the inward testimonies and convictions of it on the soul, a doing despite unto the Spirit of grace, which we call a sinning against conscience, & this I take to be the import of τὸ πνεύματι ἐλασφημία, the blasphemy or blaspheming of the Spirit.

I think few will deny but that this sin is the same with that which the Apostle describes, *Heb. 6. 4, 5, 6.* and *Heb. 10. 26, 27* and which St *John* mentions, *1 Joh. 5. 16.* which scriptures, duely compar'd will best contribute to their own interpretation.

St *Paul* calls it a person's willfull falling away from the foundation of faith and repentance, after he hath been once enlightened, and hath tasted of the heavenly gift, and been made partaker of the holy Ghost, and tasted of the good word of God, and the powers of the world to come.

This description we shall now consider in its parts; wherein we have the *Act*, the *Agent* and the *Object*.

1. 1. The *Act*, which is the *Genus* of the description, and that

1. 1. *Simply*, or in it self. It is a kind, or (if it may be admitted) a degree of *Apostasy* or *Back-sliding*. So the Apostle calls it a *falling away*, a *drawing back*.

πιστο-  
σύνης.  
*Heb. 6. 6*  
ἀποστα-  
σίῃ.  
*ib. 10. 39.*

2. The act, with its *specifick* differ-  
ces, as

1. Of

1. Of the *internal principle*. It is a *willfull* falling away. The more there is of the will in any sin, the greater is the guilt. There is no sin but hath more or less of the will in it. But there are the perfect and imperfect, the absolute and relative or compare acts of the will, nor do I say that every falling off, or that every degree of the assent of the will to it doth incur the guilt of this sin. But the *Willfulness* the *culpable*. An apostle here speaks of is the absolute, deliberate and pertinacious act of the will, a falling away *sponte sua* of a mans own accord, proceeding merely from the inward pravity, and evil disposition of his own will.

2. Of the *Quality*. *nequam* is *lapsus* 2. *nequam*, a wicked falling away; not of ignorance or common infirmity; but of wickedness, a perverse, irreligious, atheistical disposition of the mind.

3. Of the *Mode*, it is a decay, or sliding 3. away by little and little, there are several degrees and steps that tend to the perfecting, or consummation of this sin. It is like a gangreen, which though it doth *enecare cito*, yet it kills by degrees, first it enters on some remoter part, and thence steals on to the heart, or like the fall of a house: first the foundation sinks, then the building cracks, then it bows, and then it tumbles. *Nemo repente scit* *Juv. Sat.* *turpissimus*.

4. Of the *degrees*, 'Tis not onely a falling, 4.

but a falling away. The righteous fall in their way, but not from their way, *gradually*, but not *totally*. But this is a falling away as a withered, rotten branch, never to be united more, which men gather up for the fire. 'Tis an unhappy, fatal fall, which so breakes the bones, that there is never any rising again with life, *it is impossible to renew them again unto repentance.*

2. 2. The *Agent*, or *subject*; characteriz'd in these five particulars.

1. 1. It is one that hath been *once inlightned*. We dare not think, with the old *Novatians*, that by inlightned, the Apostle intends all those that are once baptized, though *baptizati* & *illuminati* sometimes pass with *Chrysostome* for synonymous termes, and many of the ancients so understood it here, on which account the Epistle was once suspected of *Novatianisme*, as *Tossanus* says. 'Tis true, we can understand here no other than common illumination; but who knows not, but that common illuminations may be extensively, as large, and visibly fair; though not intensively as deep and piercing, nor so clear, distinct and practical, as that which is special and saving. Common and special grace are so near alike *quoad vultum*, that many times they are not distinguishable by a humane eye. This sin then is of one that hath attain'd unto a competency of knowledge; therefore not a sin of ignorance.

πὸς ἡμᾶς  
φωτίζ-  
ομεν.  
Semel bapti-  
zatos intelle-  
xerunt. Toss.  
in loc.

2. It

2. It is one that hath *tasted of the heavenly* <sup>2.</sup>  
*gift*: that is of *faith*, as some say, or *eternal* <sup>D. Anon  
Pist.</sup>  
*life*, as others. We grant, these are the gifts  
of God, and therefore heavenly, and so is  
every good gift else. Jam. 1. 17. But if we  
may, without wrong to the text restrain it to  
any one particular gift, I think we may most  
properly and safely apply it to him, who is  
*the Gift* *κατ' ἐξοχὴν* Joh. 4. 10. and *the bread*  
*which came down from heaven*, Joh. 6. 51.  
which corresponds the more smoothly with  
the other part of the allegorie, and *have tasted*.  
Which Peter also expresses in almost the same  
phrase, 1. Pet. 2. 3. *If so be ye have tasted that*  
*the Lord is gracious*. *Tasted*, that is, not barely  
received the History of Christ, by the hear-  
ing of the ear; but hath had his senses exer-  
cil'd, to experience something of the sweet-  
ness of Christ, hath received him with joy;  
nay, it may be, even transported and rap't up  
sometimes into a kind of extasy of delight,  
which yet proves as a wind, that passeth away,  
and returneth not again, like the affections of  
*Ammon to Thamar*, or like the seed on the house  
top, none thrives like it at first start; but af-  
terward it withers irrecoverably. He hath  
tasted, but that's all, he never truly fed on  
Christ, nor well digested what he tasted,  
some common convictions he hath had,  
and sense of his desirableness, but never  
any sober, hearty and resolved settling of the



soul on him, as his chiefest good and proper center.

3. 3. It is one *that hath been made partaker of the holy Ghost*, that is, of the gifts of the holy Ghost. Those gifts are such as were either common to the Hypocrites as well as the saints, or special and such as accompany salvation; the common, which alone are to be understood here, are either (1) *extraordinary*, as the gifts of healing, tongues, miracles &c. as the holy Spirit was pleas'd to manifest it self in the primitive times of the gospel promiscuously, to hypocrites as well as true believers. (2) or *ordinary*, as all moral vertues, both in the habit and exercise, and some resemblances and shadows of evangelical grace, as faith, repentance and new obedience, which though they may be fair, yet are but lifeless and vanishing forms in all but the elect.

4. 4. It is one *that hath tasted of the good word*, or the goodness of the word, of God, that is, of the promises and gracious terms of the gospel. Such were they of whom Christ speaks, *Joh. 5. 35. Ye were willing for a season to rejoyce in his light.* And such was Herod, *Mar. 6. 20. who heard John gladly, and did many things.* And the stony ground, *Matth. 13. 26. That heareth the word and anon with joy receiveth it.* One that hath been not onely convinc'd of the truth of the Doctrine, but in some measure affected with the sweetness of the  
grace

*Verbum  
in angeli.  
Piscar.*

grace of the gospel. Like *Ezekiel's* hearers, *Ezek. 33, 32*. Or the guest that wanted his wedding garment, *Matth. 22, 11, 12*. He had obeyed the call, accepted of the offer, sat down at the table of ordinances, was received into the communion of the saints, had partaken of the common blessings of the gospel, and yet all the while an hypocrite. Yet I do not say that every hypocrite, that lives and dies so, is formally guilty of this sin against the holy Ghost.

5. It is one that bath tasted the powers of the world to come. *δυνάμεις μέλλοντος αἰῶνος*. *Seculi futuri virtutes*. By the world to come, we must necessarily understand, with the current of expositors, *heaven*, and eternal life, on the one hand, and I think I may add, *hell* and eternal death on the other hand. The powers and virtue of this life to come, is that mighty and heart-affecting influence, that the hopes of obtaining the one, and escaping the other have upon men's spirits; and to taste of these powers, is to be thus influenc'd.

3. The Object, or terminus à quo. This is 3. the foundation of faith and repentance; which we must take not possessive, but appositive, i. e. *ἡμῶν* those Doctrins and principles which are the *μετανοίας* foundation and ground-work of true religion. *ἡ ἀρχὴ τοῦ χριστιανικοῦ λόγου*. The word of the beginning of Christ, or of Christianity. Now this falling away may be either in practice, or in profession too. *Omissio quædam christi rudis inchoat sacrament. B&C*

1. *In practice.* Such were those of whom the Apostle speaks *Ti. 1. 16.* They profess that they know God, but in works they deny him. That continue a visible owning of the true doctrine of the gospel, at least in the most substantial and essential parts of the theory, or notion of it; but practically deny and oppose it, and fall into the corruptions and abominations of the times, complying *repente conscientia* with what they once detested and defied, out of a slavish fear, or idolatrous love of the world; it may be, from the height of strictness, to the depth of prophaness. This, we must needs say, is a dreadful degree of apostasy, especially being committed against checks of conscience, and the actual illuminations and convictions of the Spirit. Who can deny but that this is to sin directly against the holy Ghost? and a practical blaspheming of the Spirit of God, when a person is judicially delivered up to vile affections? Though this be seldom pardon'd, nay, oftentimes attended with some remarkable and fatal judgment, yet we dare not say, that it is unpardonable, till the providence of God manifest it so to be. Such a soul is as a branch desperately broken; yet not wholly broken away and mortified, but so, as that it hangs, as it were, by the bark, which the care & compassion of the husbandman may, if he see it good, bind up, and per-

perhaps recover, though we seldom see it done. I dare not affirm that such a soul is not to be prayed for; though I think, I should be able to pray for him with no great comfort or confidence, especially after some notable judgment of God hath seiz'd on him, which he seems rather to be hardned, than softned under.

2. *In profession too.* When not onely the power, but the very *forme*, of godliness is cast off, & a person obstinately refuses to own Christ in his person, or in his laws; denies and contemnes the doctrine of the gospel, and the way of salvation made and tender'd to the world therein. This, I must needs say, is plainly and compleatly the sin against the holy Ghost, that is as far as it is willfull, and of a person præqualified as you have heard.

*Ob.* You may demand now, on what account the Jews were condemned of this sin, who were never so far enlightned, as to acknowledge Christ to be the *Messiah*. *Ob.*

*Sol.* 1. I dare not say or think, that all the Jews that believed not that Christ was the Messiah, were guilty of this sin, though they had seen his miracles. For, some of them, doubtless, did not much concern themselves in the inquisition of these mysteries. Others, for want of better understanding, knew not what positive determinations to make in the case, but accounted it safer to stick to their rulers.

lers & teachers, whose lips should preserve knowledge, and at whose mouth they were to enquire, therefore, *Have any of the Rulers or of the Pharisees believed on him? John 7. 48.* Others might be really, though ignorantly scandaliz'd and scrupl'd in conscience, at his seeming breaches of the Sabbath, and violation of *Moses's* Law, and contempt of those religious traditions, which they were generally so zealous for; on which account they look'd on him as a *Sinner, Joh. 9. 24. & a Blasphemer, Joh. 10. 33.* & therefore not the *Messiah*; but a *Deceiver, Matth. 27. 63.* Others might be offended at the meanness of his condition in the world; for they generally expected, that the *Messiah* should have come in other manner of glory and pomp, and have restored them a worldly kingdom *Luk. 19. 11. Act. 1. 6.* So that though they might see some of the promises and prophecies, which related to the *Messiah*, full fill'd in him; yet they could not see many others so clearly full-fill'd. I need not particularize all those occasions of offence, at which they might stumble, and by which their minds and consciences being darkned and defiled, they could not give up the assent of faith to him. I confess that the argument of miracles is one of the clearest and last external arguments to prove the truth and verity of the gospel; but that ever any one believ'd merely on the force and power of this



this argument, I hope *Mr. B.* will not say; nor dare I think that all those, that had once denyed their faith, though under some convictions, were presently delivered up to a reprobate sence, but might after ward be fully perswaded, either by the same argument or some other, which once they slighted and opposed, when the Spirit of God undertakes the effectual management of the argument on them, as, doubtless, was the case of many of these very Jews. Nay, Christ himself, even on the cross prays for them indefinitely, and testifies that *they knew not what they did.* *Luk.* 23. 34. And the Apostle too, *Act.* 3. 17. *I wot that through ignorance ye did it.* But for sins of *Ignorance* and wickedness unwittingly committed, there was ever a place of expiation by sacrifice. Besides a sin of *Ignorance*, and the *sin against the holy Ghost* imply a contradiction *in termes.* Yea, and many of those very persons were afterward converted and saved by the ministry of the Apostles. Whence I conclude it beyond controversy, that they had not all incurr'd this inextinguishable guilt, who had once refused to receive Christ for the *Messiah* on the testimony of his doctrine and miracles.

2. But that some of them were guilty, is as unquestionable. We find that some of them were so far convinc'd concerning Christ, as openly to acknowledge and follow him, yea  
were

were ready to have hazarded their lives and fortunes to have made him King, *Joh. 6. 15.* Yet afterward fell away, *ver. 66.* Some in hatred of his spiritual Doctrine; others out of fear of persecution, and an idolatrous love of the world, on several occasions fell from him, and became his enemies; of these doubtless many sinn'd against the direct perswasions of their own consciences, that *Judas* thus sinn'd (I think) we need not question; and that he had several others with him in the same condemnation, especially among the Priests and Pharisees, I think is no breach of charity to suppose; if we compare *Matth. 28. 11, 12, 13.* with those other things that we read of them in the new Testament. Many, that never made an open profession of him to the world, yet were so far inlightned in their consciences, that their own hearts could not but secretly acknowledge him; yet out of an inveterate prejudice against his doctrine and spiritual kingdom, they would not own, but oppose and maligne him; especially the *Priests* and their *Hierarchy*, whose dignity and *Revenues* were like to be chang'd and abolish'd, by the coming of a spiritual kingdom. So that, though this sin in them were not apostasy from an open profession; yet it was an apostasy from, and malignity against the inward convictions and illumination on the conscience. It is said of *Pilate* *Matth. 27. 18.*

*That*

*Sive accessio  
vix externa  
confessio. Aug.  
mon. 81.  
Loc. Com. par.  
1. loc. 8.*

That he knew that for envy they had delivered him. And the Centurion and they that were with him confess'd that he was the son of God, ver. 34. Whence it appears that there were some secret notices upon the spirits of some of them, which they had much ado to resist. 'Tis confess'd that not to believe the testimony of miracles is to sin against the highest *Means*. But that the not believing of this evidence (though aggravated with the blaspheming of that power by which it was wrought) is the sin against the *holy Ghost* we deny, for all this may be done ignorantly and unwittingly, of which, we may think that *Paul* himself was once guilty. But in is the malicious & blasphemous resisting and stifling the inward convictions of the spirit of grace upon the conscience. As many of the Pharisees did; what they did against Christ and his Disciples ignorantly, what ever the other aggravations might be, I dare affirm, committed not therein this unpardonable sin; what ever *Mr. B.* seem to suggest to the contrary. And if I thought that the thing wanted proof, I would enlarge my Digression to that purpose. I shall only refer to *Lev. 4. 2, 3. Num. 15. 24. 1028. Heb. 5. 2. 1. Tim. 1. 13.*

As for those divines, that judge the sin against the *holy Ghost* to be an opposing of the known truth, merely out of malice against it and truth; *Mr. B.* questions whether humane nature

Luk. 20. 14.  
Lyra on  
Math. 12.  
thinks the  
Pharisees  
knew Jesus  
to be the  
Christ. Baxt.  
Unreason. of  
Infid.

nature be capable of it. I may further improve the question; whether the diabolical nature be capable of it. Simply to hate truth as truth I think, is utterly incompatible with any rational or intellectual *Being*.

But if he think it incredible that the Jews should know, that is, be convinc'd by common illumination that Christ was the *Messiah*; and yet (through the power of Satan, the fear of the *Roman Cæsar*, the carnal love to their own superstitious ways and worldly interests, joyn'd with the rooted unbelief of their hearts, and natural enmity against all that is good) that they should crucify him; he may as well think it incredible that men that are convinc'd that there is indeed a God and a devil, a heaven and a hell; and that holiness is the way to the one, and sin the way to the other, should be able to scorn and trample on the confessed means for the obtaining of the one and avoidance of the other, and much more incredible that those that have been savingly inlightned to discern between good & evil, should yet commit what they know to be evil, wherein they do in a sense crucify Christ afresh.

From what hath been said I conclude, that the sin against the *holy Ghost* is either *visible*, or *invisible*.

- I. *Visible*, which hath hitherto been described. A persons willfull rejecting and renouncing

nouncing of his faith in, & profession of Christ in despite of the light and conviction of his own conscience; and this, I think, is that which alone is to be judged, the sin against the Holy Ghost, *foro hominis*. Neither is this sentence to be past on any particular person until the utmost means be used, with all patience & long sufferance, and regular process made by private and public admonition & excommunication.

2. *Invisible*. Which falls not under the 2. censure of mans judgement. *Athanasius* the Great in his judicious discourse of the sin against the *Holy-Ghost* gives us this distinction. *He that sinneth transgresseth the law; but he that is guilty of this blasphemy committeth impiety against the God-head it self.* But it is certain, that there is no sin, but is the transgression of the law; nor any transgression of the law, but that it is an impiety committed against the holy Trinity. Yet there are some sins, that do more immediatly and directly strike at God in his Being, and incommunicable Attributes, though we dare not say, that every such sin is this against the *Holy-Ghost*. Again there are some sins committed more peculiarly against the Holy-Ghost, not only in its Person, but in its proper Office, which is the illumination of the mind; so that all sins against knowledge and checks of conscience, which are *vastantia conscientiam*, as one says, are sins committed immediatly against the holy Spirit in its pecu-

*Fit contra propriam ipsius operationem, quia est illuminatio mentium in cognitionem Evangelii.*  
Alc. l. c. ibid.



liar office and operation, and have a direct tendency to the sin in question; yet this may consist with a visible profession, though they are dead while alive. And of these some sin at a higher rate than others; which gives us occasion to consider that Distinction of sin into *Venial* and *Mortal*. This Distinction we will allow, though not in the *Romish* sence; but in respect of the event, as that is call'd *venial*, which is actually pardoned, or evangelically pardonable, and that *mortal*, which is never pardoned, whether it be such, as, with reference to the declared will of God, be pardonable, or no. To this we might subjoin that notion of *Remissible*, and *Irremissible*. Sins *irremissible* are so, either in respect of Gods *revealed*, or his *secret* will. Such as are guilty of the Apostacy we have now been speaking of, he hath declared, shall never be forgiven. And those that continue in an estate of unbelief and impenitency, and trifle with the means of grace, until death snatch them away, or that outsit the day of their visitation, the time determined of God for the spirit to move on the matters of the soul, in order to the work of conversion, he hath in his secret counsel determined their destruction; they have sinned against the *Holy-Ghost*; and their sin shall never be forgiven. A man may be in an unpardonable estate, that never committed the unpardonable sin. That God hath in his secret coun-

counsel determin'd a time unto every soul under the gospel, & limited them a day, wherein they shall be effectually converted, or judicially hardned, & delivered up to a reprobate sence, I think, is clear, both from *Scripture & Experience.*

**I. From Scripture.** Gen. 6. 3. *My Spirit* 1. *shall not allway strive with man, for that he also is flesh; yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years.* Here God sets bounds to the

strivings of his spirit with man. It shall not always strive, or shall not wait so long on them any more, as it hath done. Ezek. 24.

13. *Because I have purged thee and thou wast not purged, thou shalt not be purged from thy filthiness any more, till I have caused my fury to rest upon thee.* I have purged, that is, I would have purged thee. Thou hadst a day, but

thou knewest it not; when I would, thou wouldst not; therefore now the decree is past, it is too late, thou shalt never be purged.

*Mundare te  
volui, con-  
tus sum mun-  
dare. Vatab.  
in loc.*

Luk. 19. 42. *If thou hadst known, even thou, at least in this thy day, the things which belong to thy peace; but now they are hid from thy eyes.* So it is said of Jezebel, Rev. 2. 21. *I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.*

So of the Jews, Joh. 8. 21. *I go my way, and ye shall seek me, and shall dy in your sins: whither I go, ye cannot come.* How fully would this appear from scripture parables and similitudes.

Matth. 13. 3. *The kingdom of heaven is compar'd to the sowing of a field: the sower hath*

his season proper to every grain; when the seed-time is over there's no more sowing, loose the season and the whole year is lost. *Prov. 6. 6, 8.* Go to the ant thou sluggard, consider her ways, and be wise; which provideth her meat in the summer. *Jer. 8. 7.* The stork in the heaven knoweth her appointed times, and the turtle, and the crane, and the swallow observe the time of their coming; but my people know not the judgement of the Lord. *Eccles. 12. 1.* Remember thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them. *Psal. 32. 6.* For this shall every one that is godly pray in a time when thou mayst be found, surely in the floods of great waters they shall not come nigh him. In the time of finding, says the Original, while the throne of grace is accessible, and the golden scepter is held out, while he is in a good posture, and able to be treated with, says the text. He hath a time of finding, and a time of forsaking. *Isa. 55. 6.* Seek the Lord while he may be found, call upon him while he is near. *Luk. 13. 7.* Behold, these three years I come seeking fruit on this fig-tree, and find none: cut it down, why cumbereth it the ground? God hath set both nations and persons their bounds, beyond which, when they once pass, there is no more hope. Conversion is a begetting; If once the womb be superannuated, it is for ever barren.

2. *From Experience.* We find that those, 2. that have been under the inward strivings of the Spirit in order to a thorow change on the soul; and have at last so resisted, that the Spirit gives over, & the soul returns with allowance and delight to its old lusts again, it grows deader and deader still; and the Spirit seldome returns to renew the convictions, unless it be to its torment. *Wicked men and deceivers grow worse and worse.* 2 Tim. 3. 13. *And he that being often reproved hardneth his neck shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy.* Pro. 29. 1. *The earth that drinketh in the rain that cometh oft upon it, and yet beareth thorns and bryars, is nigh unto cursing,* Heb. 6. 7, 8. When the unclean spirit, that once seem'd to be cast out, returns to take up his old dwelling, the last state of that man is worse than the first, Luk. 11. 26.

But now to return out of this large digression, I have told you what this sin against the *Holy-Ghost* is in the nature of it, viz. a total Apostacy from Christ. I might tell you what it is in the *Effects* of it. I shall but referr you to what the scripture saith of it: Christ himself tells us, *Matth. 12. 31. That it shall not be forgiven unto men, neither in this world, nor in the world to come, ver. 32.* 'Tis true, there shall nothing be forgiven in the world to come, that is not forgiven in this world; but the words are a kind of *Pleonasm*, assevering the

ἀνακαίνι-  
 ζεν εἰς  
 περιστοί-  
 ας.

utter impossibility of forgiveness, and the denouncing of the judgment with a sacred resolution and indignation. The sentence is irreversible; he shall dy the death. The Apostle tells us, *Heb. 6. 4, 6. That it is impossible to renew them again to repentance.* Not, but that the blood of Christ is of sufficient value to expiate such a sin; but they are in the righteous judgment of God, delivered up to utter impenitency, that they cannot possibly repent, and therefore cannot possibly be forgiven. God hath withdrawn his spirit from them for ever, and *παρέδωκε τῷ σατανᾷ delivered them up to Satan.* Again, *chap. 10. 26, 27. There remaineth no more sacrifice for sins; but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the Adversaries.* As under the law, he that sinned presumptuously was to be cut off; there was no sacrifice for such a sin. A willful Apostacy from the true God was death without mercy. *Deut. 13. 5, 6. &c. And of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the spirit of Grace.* *Heb. 10. 29.* Oh! what a cup of trembling doth this scripture put into the guilty Back-sliders hand! Christ is the only gospel-sacrifice: but him he hath trampled under his feet; therefore there remaineth



maineth no other sacrifice to expiate his sin. But a certain fearful looking for of judgment. Yea, of how much sorer punishment shall he be thought worthy. Observe 'tis not *mercy* but *judgment*, not only *judgment* but *vengeance*, not *vengeance* only, but *sore vengeance*, yea, *sorer vengeance* than death without mercy. *Comp. ver. 28.* Nor is this all, but *how much sorer vengeance*? And, which is not the least aggravation, all this shall be inflicted *worthily*, which is that sting in the tail of an ever-tormenting conscience. This is that, which is in this case to be lookt for, which cannot be without horror and dread. 'Tis true these fearful expectations are not always in *act*. The furious hands of conscience may in this life be bound up, that it cannot tear and rend the soul, as else it would do; the heart may be so cauteriz'd, as that it may be past sence; so hardned as to go on boldly, till it sink down-right into the unquenchable flames. But yet, whatever the stupid security be, there is this expectation at the bottom; and ordinarily it operates sooner or later; and breaks out into horrible despaire, or hellish cursings and blasphemies. Both the work and torments of hell are begun in them here on earth; as it was with *Judas*, with *Julian*, *Lucian*, *Porphyry*, *Tamerus*, *Latomus*, and many others, that are on that black *File*. *And fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.*

Φοβερά δὲ  
τὴν ἐκδοχὴν  
κρίσεως.  
Πόσον  
λείγονος  
αἰτίου ἦσεν  
ταὶ πινυ-  
ρίας.

Πυρὸς ζήλος ἐσθλὸν μένον· the zeal, the jealousy, the irresistible rage of fire, that is about to eat up and devour them; yet not to consume, but to feed and prey upon them to all eternity. *Ver. 39.* he calls it a *drawing back to perdition*. *St. John* calls it a *sin unto death*, *1 Job. 5. 16.* and for which we are not to pray. As Christ hath excluded them from his intercessions in heaven; so must the church from her intercessions on earth.

Now sinner! thou who hast begun to tumble, whom Satan hath gotten off the hinges, look up, and consider from whence thou art fallen, and look down to that pit, into which thou art falling. Remember a fall from thy feet may cost thee a limb, but a fall from a *pinacle* will cost thee thy neck. As sure as thou now livest, and must shortly dy: As sure as thou seest the sun posting from east to west, or the streams and rivers all gliding downward toward the sea; so certain, so natural and direct is the tendency of every act of thy backsliding, in its self, to this formidable and tremendous end. Sin on but a little longer, and it may be too late to repent, too late to pray, or to be pray'd for. One year, one week, or one day more, and (for ought thou knowest) the judgment may come forth against thee, and seal thee up for ever in thy impenitency, and set thee beyond the reach of an arm of *mercy* to recover thee,

Obj.

*Obj.* But here, it may be, some, that have *Obj.* least reason, may be most ready to torment themselves with fears that they have incurr'd the unpardonable guilt of this sin, at least secretly, and in heart, and consequently that the day of grace is past with them, and too late for them to hope.

Wherefore, least I should seem to launce, and not to leave a *balm* to heal: I shall add a word or two for the comfort of those to whom comfort belongs.

*Sol. 1.* There are some, who are none of *Sol. 1.* the best, that too much busy themselves with those *arcana Dei*, secrets of God, which belong not to man, to the abuse both of the divine Majesty and mercy, and the gross contempt of their own duty. And there are others, who are none of the wisest, that rack their melancholy thoughts with these things, to the spoil of their peace and neglect of their duty.

2. To such I shall give this general caution. Take heed how you conclude that the day of grace is over, while the means of grace are continued, though it be possible that it may be so, yet it is better to hope, than to despair.

3. Though the first offers of grace have been slighted, and many convictions of the spirit stifled, and no thorow closure with Christ made; yet you may not conclude that

the day of grace is over! 'tis possible that a parting knock may do that, which many calls and knocks before could not do.

4. 4. Though the spirit hath once given over striving for a time, and the soul falls into some gross and foul miscarriages and scandalous sins; yet who can tell, but that he may return with healing in his wings, *For to him that is joined to all the living there is hope, for a living dog is better than a dead lion, Eccl. 9. 4.*

5. 5. While there are any inclinations on the heart, any desires towards God, any serious thoughts of another world, or troubles about the estate and condition of the soul, though they be but low and ordinary; we may not conclude that such a one is past hope. But the truth is, that when convictions have once been quick and piercing, and carried a person as far as an outward reformation and strict profession, and yet afterward, through the prevailing of some habituated and beloved lusts, all dy away by degrees and come to nothing, such a soul hath sad cause to fear, that his sun is set upon him, and that he is but reserv'd unto a day of wrath; for he is a God that will not be mocked with whom we have to do.

I have but a word more on this doctrine, and that is of *caution*, which is already form'd to our hands in the words of the Apostle, *Heb. 3. 12, 13. Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any*

*of*

of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God; but exhort one another daily, while it is called to day, lest any of you be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin.

This caution, *Janus-like*, looks two ways; on our selves and others.

1. *Our selves: Take heed, lest there be in any* 1.

of you an evil heart of unbelief, or an evil unbelieving heart, in departing; or that it should depart; as the unbelieving *Jewes* in the wilderness, or which is wont to be discovered in departing or apostatizing from the living God. Here's the root of Apostacy. An unbelieving is a backsliding heart. Unbelief is a spiritual gangreen, a gangreen kills when it gets to the heart; how much more that that's bred in the heart? *the just shall live by his faith*; if faith dy, all dies with it.

ἐν τῷ  
καρδίᾳ  
Quod à Deo  
deficiat.

2. *Others.* Exhort one another daily, call 2.

upon one another, admonish, beseech, interceed with, and for, incourage, be instant, and with all possible importunity quicken one another. On the contrary, do not censure, reproach, condemn or quarrel with one another; but exhort in the spirit of meekness, and brotherly love and compassion, that ye may be refreshed and strengthened one by another, whereunto he insinuates these two arguments.

παραγγε-  
λῆτε.

1. The seasonableness and shortness of the time: *while it is called to day*. Yet God waites to be gracious; now is the day of your visitation,

tion,



tion, the time that God hath given you to make sure of Christ in, and in which he hath promis'd to accept you. Yet you are in a capacity of being helpful to one anothers souls. And remember, 'tis but a day, the measure of whose hours you know not; night is at hand, when no man can work, if you loose your day, to morrow will be too late.

2. 2. The dangerous consequence of neglecting this duty, *lest any of you be hardned through the deceitfulness of sin.* Your and your brethrens souls ly at stake, and you have to do with a treacherous enemy, that will prompt and deceive you with vain pleas and excuses, drawn from discouragement on the one hand, and flatteries on the other. Look to it, yet you may pray, and confesse to your mutual comfort and edification, and watch with a holy care for one anothers souls, if you loose this your day, you shall curse and rend and gnash the teeth, and howl over one another to all eternity. Loose a day and you may loose more souls than one. *Wherefore let us consider one another to provoke unto love and to good works.* Heb. 10. 24.

The second general Proposition is this.

Prop. 2. *That back-sliding is a sin that none but God can heal.*

This Proposition leads us to the consideration of

The Patient.

The

The Disease.

The Physician.

The Cure.

1. *The Patient* ; who he is.

1.

1. *In General* : not *Angels* ; Their wound is incurable. *For verily he took not on him the nature of Angels ; but he took on him the seed of Abraham, Heb. 2. 16.* But *man* ; even all mankind. As we all sprung from fallen *Adam*, and are heirs of his original Apostacy, thus we are all sick of back-sliding, and need a Physician, as was said before.

2. *In special*. Such as have been under the Physicians hands, and received something towards a cure, and fairly promis'd a happy success ; that have begun well, and it may be, made some good progress in the knowledge and ways of God ; but have left their first works and are fallen into a Relapse.

2. *The Patient*. What he is.

2?

1. In respect of his *Distemper*. But this more properly under the next.

1.

2. In respect of his *Temper*.

2.

1. He is a Patient, that knows not that he is sick, nor will believe it. Tell him what you will, open his condition to him never so faithfully and plainly, all are but as words of course that signify nothing with him, but to pass away the time. Tell him that his liver is corrupted, that his heart and vitals are overcharged, that his pulse beats very irregularly, and

and his condition is very doubtful. Tell him whence all this proceeds, and what he must do, if he mean to secure his health or life, and you will seem but as one that worketh, he knows not but that he is as well as any others.

*Ro. 7. 9.* *Strangers have devoured his strength and he knoweth it not.* Strange delusions devour his Reason; strange lusts devour his Affections, and he knoweth it not. I confess this is not the case of all Back-sliders; there are some, that, on a convincing admonition are quickly brought to see their sin; Others that cannot go on with that peace and freedom as they desire; but now and then are forc'd to grapple with a wrestling, wounding conscience, under fore streights and fears, which may put them on some external duties and formal confessions; yet where almost can we find that Back-slider, that will not presently fly to self justification, if he be but particularly reprov'd: nay, many that are ready to acknowledge it in general before God; yet will not endure the least imputation of it from men, though never so visible and palpable.

2. *He hath not the least power to heal or to help himself:* neither to effect the cure, nor any thing towards it. *They are wise to do evil; but to do good they have no understanding,* Jer. 15. 18. *Not that we are able of our selves to think anything as our selves,* 2 Cor. 3. 5. We may say here with the Prophet, though in another sense,

sence, *His strength is to sit still*, Jer. 30. 7. All that he can do for himself is but to *grow worse and worse*. 'Tis true the wicked are sometimes call'd *strong* and *men of strength*; but it is to do wickedly, *strong to drink wine*, Isa. 5. 22. *Strong to commit uncleanness*, 2 Sam. 13. 14. *Strong to persecute and oppress*, Psal. 18. 17. *Strong as lions, as bears, as unicornes, as bulls*. But *Fortitudo ista non sanitatis est, sed insania*. Aug. in Psal. 58. *This is the strength of mad men*, which is onely to do mischief. Yea, 'tis true too, that they have a natural strength to do more good than they do; but they want a sanctified Principle to direct their strength to its right Object and End.

3. *Nor hath he any real desires to be healed*, 3. *ye will not come unto me that ye might have life*, Joh. 5. 40. He knows not but that he is well enough, at least, as well as most others; and cares not to be better. As long as it is well with his body, in health and peace and plenty, he knows nothing so much amiss by his soul, as that it should trouble him; but eats and drinks and sleeps and minds his worldly business, as his calling or his lusts guide him, and even scorns to be numbred with those that have need of the Physician.

4. *He is not onely captivated by, but voluntarily devoted to one that is bent to ruin him*. He is caught in an evil net. *In the snares of the devil, and taken captive by him at his will*, 2 Tim. 2. 26.

Jer. 5. 31.  
Chap. 2. 25.

2. 26. Not onely his prisoner, but his votary; *My people love to have it so. I have loved strangers and after them will I go.* Satan hath gotten the possession of him, not by constraint, but consent. The snare hath not taken him by the heel onely, but by the heart. The devil and his wicked heart are at agreement.

5. *Whence it follows, that the soul loaths whatsoever really tends to its recovery.* There is a rooted prejudice, both a natural and acquired Antipathy against the true Physician, and against his healing means and method. *I have called and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsels, and would none of my reproof, Prov. 1. 24, 25.* Calls and counsels are but occasions of scorn, and accusation. The disease is a *noli me tangere*: too tender to be toucht; he that adventures to meddle with it, must look for a sting. But having spoken to this purpose before; this shall suffice to be added here for the characterizing of the Patient.

2. 2. *The Disease.* Which may be considered as a sickness, or as a wound; for sin is both, *Isa. 1. 5, 6.* Diseases are of several kinds, according to the several peculiar subjects or seats of them; so it is here. There is ignorance, forgetfulness, errour, heresy, superstition, diseases of the head, pride, hypocrisy, unbelief, impenitency, &c. The plague of the heart: covetous-



covetousness, passion, lust, timorousness, lukewarmness, the sickness of the affections. Stubbornness, slavery, rebellion, the distempers of the will, fearedness, unfaithfulness, &c. the evils of the conscience. Now backsliding is a relapse into all these either actually or dispositionally.

So then, the sickness in question is by some call'd a *falling-sickness*, or rather a *relapse* indefinitely; a returning with the dog to his vomit, and with the sow that was washed to her wallowing in the mire, 2 *Pet.* 2. 22. It is a falling (as one says) and that not forward, where the knees and hands might help to break the blow, or to rise again, but, which is most dangerous, a falling backward; not a falling in the way, but from the way. *Bernard*, as *Dr. Reynolds* observes, compares it to a falling into a pit or prison full of dirt and stones, which doth not onely defile, but most miserably break and bruise. We will now consider it a little in the effects of it under the notion of a wound.

*Cecidimus in  
carcerem in-  
to pariter &  
lapidibus pl-  
num, captivi,  
inquinati,  
conquassati.  
Bern.*

1. *It wounds conscience, and that both in the peace and in the life of it.*

1. *In its peace.* It fills the soul with horror and trembling. *The sinners in Sion are afraid, fearfulness hath surprized the hypocrites: Who among us shall dwell with the devouring fire! who among us shall dwell with everlasting burnings.* *Isa.* 33. 14. Conscience begins to burn within

R

them:

Gen. 3. 10.

Chap. 4. 13.

Math. 27.

4. 5.

*Peccatum  
quod inultum  
videtur habet  
pedissequum  
penam suam.  
Aug.*

*Materna  
specie verber-  
ibus furja-  
rum ac ipsis  
ardentibus,  
Dion. in  
Neron.*

them. Fire comes out of the bramble and de-  
vours their peace. The sparkes of the infernal  
pit fly in their eyes, and they are inwardly  
scorched in those flames! *I heard thy voice in  
the garden, and was afraid, because I was naked,  
and I hid my self. My punishment is greater  
than I can bear. I have sinned in that I have be-  
trayed the innocent blood; and he departed and  
went and hanged himself.* The backsliding spi-  
rit is a spirit of bondage and fear, *Rom. 8. 15.*  
Even in the penitent *haeret lateri letalis arun-*  
*do.* The poysoned dart sticks in their side,  
though 'tis possible they may carry it a while,  
without any visible regret, yet it inwardly  
rankles, and at last bursts out into the greater  
horror or despair. This was that *evil spirit*  
*from the Lord* that pursued guilty *Saul*, from  
the day that the spirit of the Lord departed  
from him, *1 Sam. 16. 14.* Much ado he had  
to bear up under it, by the help of *David's*  
harp, and the diversions of his own domesti-  
cal and political affairs: where ever he goes  
this follows him as his shade, till at last it bur-  
ries him on his own sword, and makes him his  
own executioner. This was that *fury*, that  
dogg'd the bloody *Nero*, from the murdering  
of his mother *Agrippina*; till it had chased him  
into hell. *Fulian*, *Nicomachus*, *West.* &c.  
though they stood a while, like wounded  
stags; at last their anguish overwhelms them,  
and they can stand no longer. What hellish  
groans

groans and bitter gnashings are there left on record from the mouths of such miscreants, as the foretaste of their approaching torments?

But how ever the business may be palliated with some, and a peace patch'd up in this life, it becomes at last an irreparable and eternal breach. But in the Saints (for even these, as hath been said, may in some degrees be found guilty) the wound smarts after another manner, from other principles and to other effects. It works in them a sorrowing after a godly sort. Here the conscience is tender, and therefore the grief is soon and sensible felt; though it do not transport them into that despairing and blaspheming fury; yet it works in them a genuin, hearty, quick, and cutting sorrow, they are as heavy laden as ever they can swim, it casts them into an agony, their very souls are on the rack. *My bones waxed old through my roaring all the day long; for day and night thy hand was heavy upon me, my moisture is turned into the draught of summer, Psal. 32. 3, 4.* How doth his heart melt in that Psal. 51. throughout. *Have mercy upon me o God! purge me, wash me, create in me a clean heart, cast me not away from thy presence, my sin is ever before me.* When I am at home, and when I am abroad, when in company, and when alone, when I ly down, and when I arise, it allways meets me, my soul is a terror and a weariness to herself. How dear did it cost *Peter and Origen and Bil-*

ney? &c. Penitence and pain are words of the same derivation, the body is not wont to be healed without the one, nor the soul without the other. Every sin is a cloud, but a relapse is a thick cloud. This is the rowzing, or rather the roaring, yea the renting of that home-bred Lyon of conscience, its tribunal-office in the soul, wherein it is both *Index, Judex & Carnifex*, to arraign, sentence, and execute. No sins cut so deep, as sins after repentance, no wounds smart, as a new breach on the place of an old grief. When the poor soul hath thus wandred from God, it is forc'd, as it were, to wade through hell, to recover the ground it hath lost.

2. 2. *It wounds conscience in the life of it.* It waists the vitals, at least the vigor and activity of it, and that these three ways.

1. 1. *It blinds the eye of it,* and that both in its direct and reflect acts.

1. 1. *In its direct acts.* Let it look upon God, it represents him quite otherwise than he is. *They changed their glory into the similitude of an ox that eateth grass, Psal. 106. 20. Thou thoughtest that I was altogether such a one as thy self, Psal. 50. 21.* Either it represents him as one that cannot, or that doth not take notice of mens ways. *Isa. 29. 15. Who seeth us? and who knoweth us? Ezek. 8. 12. The Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth.* As if God did not concern himself in this lower world,

world, especially in that, which men are wont to look upon as small matters, and therefore they may go on the more freely and confidently in their way, and not use so much ado about the strictness of religion. Or else it represents him as an hard man, one that is not to be pleased, *Matth. 23. 24.* As if the law of God were calculated rather for speculation and discourse, than for practice. On what spiritual things soever it looks, it represents them in a carnal manner. Let it look on Christ, *When we shall see him there is no beauty that we should desire him, Isa. 53. 2.* Let it look on the world; here it conceits that true happiness is to be found, and therefore a necessity of pursuing and securing of this, as the main chance. Let it look on the life to come, there is such a mist and cloud still before it, that it can perceive nothing here, that should much affect it either with hope or fear.

2. *In its reflect acts.* Let it look on its own heart; though it swarm with the foul monsters of hell, and be full of rottenness, and the gastly spectacles of horror and loathing, yet it can perceive nothing here that should terrify or shame it. It may look on the heart but cannot look into it, it discerns nothing: white and black are both alike to it. Again let it look on it self and all is right for ought it can discover: and no wonder indeed if a blind man cannot see the films and scales that are on his own eyes.



2. 2. *It binds the hands of it*; that it cannot strike in Gods cause. Sin is that strong man, that keeps all bound under him, till that stronger than he come. Therefore the administrations of the kingdom of grace, in the great affairs of it, are expressed by *binding* and *loosing*; in semblance whereunto, conscience hath this power and office in the souls of men, which should be the little churches of Christ, and temples of the holy Ghost, to bind and loose, to accuse or excuse. But sin is that usurping traiterous Tyrant, that takes conscience, which is Gods deputed Vice-Roy, his Plenipotentiary in the soul and binds it before his face, and takes possession of the throne, and domineers at its pleasure. Conscience is *Paterfamilias* & *custos animæ*, the good man of the house; sin is the thief that gets in and binds and gags this keeper of the soul, and then takes its pleasure of all that it finds; it ravishes and robs and kills. You may guess something what the case of such a soul must needs be; whither may not the *Philistines* lead *Sampson*, when they have bound him and put out his eyes, and his strength is departed from him, and, which is worst of all, this sad Tragedy is acted on the Back-slider by consent.

*Obj.* But will not this excuse us, that sin is too hard for us! what can we do, when we are thus bound by one that is too strong for us? Hath not this been a common case with the most

most eminent of Gods saints! and why may not we say it is no more me, but sin that dwelleth in us? as the Apostle, *Rom. 7. 20.*

*Ans.* O sinner durst thou thus wipe thy mouth, and say thou hast done no wickedness? art thou betrayed? look about thee, or rather within thee, and see where the traytour stands. Hadst not thou opened the doors, sin had never entred; Satan may suggest, but cannot force. Thy *Delilah* had never delivered thee, hadst not thou first betrayed thy self: the will is not capable of suffering violence. If thou art drawn away and entised, it is thy own lust hath done it. *Diaboli decipientis calliditas, & hominis consentientis voluntas.* Thy captivity is of thy self. Satan never triumphs, till we yield. Thy heart must tell thee, if it speak the truth, as it is said the heart of *Apollodorus* upbraided him in the kettle, *Ἐγὼ σοι τῶν αἰτίων.* 'Tis I (that is thy self) *Plur.* that have brought thee to this pass.

*Ang. De peccata Orig.*

*Obj.* But doth not the Apostle say: *The Object flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh, so that ye cannot do the things which ye would, Gal. 5. 17.*

*Ans.* True, both in this place, and *Rom. 7.* where we grant (though some oppose it) that the Apostle speaks in the person of the regenerate, he shews us that the saint in this life is compounded of contrary principles, partly flesh and partly spirit; his great design where-

in is to commend to us the excellency and necessity of the gospel. It being utterly impossible to reach that absolute perfection in this life, which the law requires, he says, *Ye are become dead to the law by the body of Christ*, that is, never to expect justification any more by the law, by which no flesh shall be justified; but to cleave to Christ, in that new and living way, wherein God will accept of sincere obedience in stead of perfect. 'Tis true, the imperfections that may accompany sincerity are very great; but where the new spiritual principle is in truth begotten, it gets the victory, therefore the saints are called such as *walk after the spirit*, that is, in the general and prevailing bent of their hearts and lives. *And now if I do that I would not, it is no more I that do it, but sin that dwelleth in me.* This I, as it is opposed to the indwelling sin, must be taken tropically not properly, *i. e.* for his renewed part, which, being the stronger side, gives the denomination. It is not I that do it, the habitual choice of my will is against it; though my subjugated and conquered enemy the *flesh*, that *se-mirata Carthago*, watching its advantages doth sometimes prevail, in some particular acts, against me. For it is certain, that as all other faculties, so also the will is but in part renewed; therefore with this habitual and prevailing willingness there are mixt some degrees of unwillingness. So that the sum of the Apostles com-

complaint amounts but to this much; that he would fain have been perfectly delivered from all those relicts and remains of corruption, that still cleave to his nature, but could not.

*And ye cannot do the things that ye would*, implies the same thing. Yet we must know that this *cannot* is not a natural, but a moral *cannot*, which, in plain English, is but *will-not*, and therefore doth not excuse. It proceeds not from the want of natural power or ability, but from a defect in the *Will*. Now for persons willingly to give up themselves captive to the power of sin, to betray their consciences, as it were, into the hands of Satan, and then to think to excuse themselves by telling us, sin is too hard for them, discovers almost as much reason and religion, as *Judas* did, when, after he had betrayed his Lord and Master, cried out, that it was innocent blood.

3. *It breaks the heart of it.* There is a weakness and faintness in all its actions. It goes to work, like a limb out of joint, feebly and irregularly. It hath neither dexterity, nor strength, nor delight in its work. Therefore to be sinners, and to be without strength is all one in the apostles sence, *Rom. 5. 6.* and *8.* compar'd. It is a consumption of the inward parts. Conscience dies away in its hole: and, through the just judgment of God upon it, many times, falls from a reproving for sin, to a delighting in it.

2. 2. It wounds the soul in all the powers of it. It infatuates the judgment, alienates the affections, stupifies the conscience, enslaves the will. The whole state of the soul is craz'd and broken, and, it being a relapse, is the more easily and effectually tainted, because there remain the dregs of the old distemper impurg'd, which still retain an aptness to entertain and improve all offers and motions that suit with it. How easily is the Back-slider toll'd on into any sin, that will but consist with his worldly interest or credit? 'Tis no strange thing to see a diverted torrent to break bounds and return into its old channel, against which it was never well fenced. The spirit of back-sliding in the heart is like a *cancerous fungus* in the body, though the gross extuberance be taken off, and the wound healed as to appearance; yet it hath that interest in the vitiated humours that gives full advantage to another, and more fatal growth. A field that hath once been over-grown with furse and bryars you may possibly make clean from all appearance of them; but let it rest a while, and you will find that the nature of the soyl is not changed.

Besides, It deforms and withers the beauty of the soul. As the inward glory is the perfectest beauty; so the inward deformity is the foulest uncomeliness. There is something of the Monster (as one says) in every sin; The belly or the feet set in the place of the

the



the head, or the heart, sensual and worldly lusts above reason, and corrupt reason above grace. But a Back-slider is a Monster made up of all these prodigious parts. Should all the bodily deformities, that are to be found among all the creatures under heaven, meet together in one Subject; how gasty & frightful a sight must it needs be? yet even this would be a beauty, compar'd with the Monster in question.

3. *It wounds Christ in his Mediatory Office.* 3.

Christ is now mediating with the Father, presenting the merits of his obedience and passion for the reconciliation of poor sinners. He hath made the atonement, payd the full ransom, and discharg'd the whole debt for all those, that in earnest accept of life and salvation by him, and on his termes; and hath ingag'd to be their Shepherd & their Captain, to bring them Safe to the Father; *To preserve them by his mighty power, through faith, unto salvation.* 1 Pet. 1. 5. Eph. 5. 27. *To present them without blemish, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing:* wherefore for a person after he hath thus received Christ, and profest subjection to him as his Mediatour, to return again to iniquity, crosses this his great and evangelical designe. He hath dyed that accursed death of the cross, that he might open to the world a fountain for sin and for uncleanness; *& this is his will even our sanctification.* 1 Thes. 4. 3. But to return to wallow in the

Rev. 22. 2.

the mire, is as it were to crucify him afresh? And what is the gospel with all its privileges, but the *Balm of Gods Gilead*? *That tree of Life, which is for the healing of the Nations*? So that the Back-slider is one that, as much as in him lies, murders his Physician, & wounds the hand that must heal him, if ever he be healed; that sins point-blank against his onely Remedy.

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4. 4. It wounds the holy Spirit. Therefore call'd a grieving and sadning of it. *Eph. 4. 30.* and a quenching it. *1 Thes. 5. 19*, The Spirit is that *Fire*, wherewith God refines his people. *The Spirit of Burning*, that consumes their dross. Quench this fire, and the refining work ceases, so that there is no more hope; but he that is filthy must be filthy still. If the extinction of the *Vestal* fire were held to be so ominous, and of so evil a consequence, as it prov'd, at least, to those miserable *votaries* that were found guilty of such a neglect, how ominous, yea how fatal shall the willfull extinguishing of these divine flames prove? As the soul is the life of the body; so the Spirit of God is the life of the soul. Who can conceive how fearful a case it is for a soul to be thus left of God to a reprobate sence, unto whom he hath once said, my Spirit shall strive no more with thee.

Lastly, *It wounds the people of God*, both in their hopes of them and delights in them. *We*

took

took sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company. We communicated (as I thought) our very hearts to one another. We heard, we prayd, we sacramented together, and hoped to have enjoyed one another in the dear and blisful embraces of an endless eternity, I should sooner have suspected my self, than so sweet a companion; But now that the Leprosy appears in him, I must walk as a stranger to him; I cannot look on him, but with loathing and shame, nor speak or think of him, but with teares and grief of soul, and jealous feares and suspicion of my self. And how doth it wound me to think what reproaches and contempt his brethren must hear for his sake, and to hear the scornes and flouts, that are dayly cast by the enemies of God; and which is worst of all, to see so many of the weak to be scandaliz'd and staggered at his fall, and ready to follow his pernicious ways. But to this purpose before.

2. We are next to consider the *Physician*; 2. and that in these two respects.

His skill.

His will.

Wherein lies the Confirmation of the Proposition.

1. *His skill*. Others are Physicians of no value in this Matter. For

1. *He alone knows the Disease*. Both in the 2. Causes, Symptomes and Effects of it. Be it never

never so occult or mysterious, he knows the Nature of it, and how to cure it. He knows the Subjects of it, and who they be that need a cure. He knows the rise and growth, with all the circumstances and occasions of it. Nay, he knows not onely how to deal with the disease; but how to suite meanes and applications according to the constitutions, tempers, strength and present estate of his patients. All those spiritual and invisible & accidental differences, that are any way between one Patient and another, or in the same patient at several times, and under different dispensations, are all open & naked before his eyes. The heart of man is a curious piece, of Gods own making; he knowz every wheel and every pin in it, and how to move it, and what obstructs or perverts it; yea, he hath some secret marks in his work, which none, but himself, understands; whereby he opens, so as none can shut, and shuts, so as none can open; he comforts, so as none can sadden, and saddens, so as none can comfort, he sees what the defect is and how to right it. *For I know their works and their thoughts. Isa. 66. 18.* Not onely their works *in opere operato*, but *in operante*, their thoughts, the secret principles, ends and qualifications of the Agents. *I know thy works* was the greeting to every one of the seven churches. *Rev. 2. & 3.* So of Sennacherib, *I know thy abode, and thy going out and thy*

*thy coming in, and thy rage against me. Isa. 27.*

38. I know all the interwoven motions both of the ways and hearts of the children of men; not one Atome or the least glance of a thought can escape my allseeing eye; though my poor finite creatures can't look on these things, but as on a confused, disorderly, inextricable Maze; with me there is nothing in all these *Meanders*, that doth so much as interfere. I

know all my peoples back-slidings, and how to pardon and reclaim them; and all their miseries and fears, and how to protect and deliver them. Surely 'tis no small comfort, when a person hath to do with a physician, that understands both his patient and his disease. But thus doth God understand both, so as none else doth or can. *Where are thy Gods that thou hast made thee? let them arise if they can save thee in the time of thy trouble. Jer. 2. 28.*

Alas these are they that have undone thee, but know no more how to help thee, than a Millstone to save a man from sinking; they can't help thee, so much as in thy trouble, the penal effects of thy back-sliding, much less can they remove the meritorious cause which they understand not. *When Ephraim saw his sickness and Judah saw his wound, then went Ephraim to the Assyrians and sent to King Je-*

*reb; yet he could not heal you, nor cure you of your wound. Hos. 5. 13.* Alas! how wide were these poor souls from the mark? They began

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to perceive at last, when it was too late, that they were in an evil case, as to their outward estate; but whence these evils came they understood not, nor how to have them righted; they thought the *Assyrian* should have been their *Fareb* to have pleaded their cause, and have bound up their wound, but alas! this is but the way to make their case so much the worse, as it prov'd to them. But now, what the *Assyrian* can't do, God can. *I have seen his ways and will heal him. Isa. 57. 18.*

2. 2. *He alone hath that by him, wherewith to effect the cure.* There are two things especially in the Disease, which must be antidoted; the *Guilt* and the *Power*. Now God alone hath that by him, that answers to both these. Imputed righteousness to expiate the *Guilt*; Infused righteousness to extirpate the power of sin. As he alone is wise enough, to know what is to be done in this case, so he alone is rich enough, to provide that which is requisite to the doing it. It would have begg'd all the world, and a thousand more such, to have purchas'd one drop of his healing balme. He alone hath patience enough to bear with such frowardness, unthankfulness and willfull relapses: and power enough to deal with such oppositions.
3. 3. *It is he alone that hath done it for all those that have ever yet been healed.* There is never a merely humane soul now in heaven, but was

once a patient to this physician, and must have been now in hell as well as others, had they not met with him. All that innumerable host of glorified saints, that are now triumphing with Christ, and walking in white, past under this physicians hands, washt in his blood, and healed by his stripes. He was that good Samaritan that saw them, as they lay gasping and welctred in their blood, and had compassion on them, and bound up their wounds and poured in oyl and wine, and brought them to his inn, and took the care of them, and all at his own charge. *Col.*

4. *He alone is a Physician every way suited to the condition of such a patient.* Not onely because the disease is spiritual, and he the God of the Spirits of all flesh; but in respect of the patient himself; as will appear by

2. *His will*, and affection to this work, 2. which again is manifested

1. *In his voluntary undertaking of the cure.* 1.

He is not first sent for, or sued to, as other physicians are, he first seeks and then saves.

*And is found of them that sought him not, Isa.*

65. 1. *Adam* was no sooner fallen, but God presently looks after him. *God was in Christ*

*reconciling the world to himself. And we are*

*ambassadors for Christ, as though God did be-*

*seech you by us: we pray you in Christs stead, be ye*

*reconciled to God, 2 Cor. 5. 19, 20.* What

strange language is this! what wrong hath

God done, that he seeks to be reconciled? 'Tis man hath offended; and yet God sues for peace, man is sick, and God first feels it, and complains. And truly 'tis well for us that it is so; man had never sought after God, had not God first sought him: we must have peris'h'd for ever without hope, had not he sought us, as well as bound us up. *Of his own will begot he us, Jam. i. 18. Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, Job. 15. 16.*

2. 2. *In that patience he exercises.* So that we may say (to speak after the manner of men) 'tis man is diseased; but God is the patient. Oh! what neglects! what repulses! what reproaches doth he dayly pass by! *I have spread out my hands all the day long to a rebellious people, Isa. 65. 2.* His messengers are mocked, and it may be worse; his directions scorned, his divine and costly antidotes and cordials nauseated, his most compassionate visits slighted. Other Physicians shall be courted and cringed to, and observed as if they were Gods; but God hath scarce that respect that is due to a man. What such a mirror of patience and condescension is there to be found among creatures, that would take such dealings from the hands of a fellow! oh how well doth such a physician suite with our peevish dispositions! surely no patience less than infinite could ever bear such burdens.

3. 3. *In that he looks for no reward, but a willing*

*ling acceptance and submission to his course.* He that hath no money may come here and well-come. *Let him take of the water of life freely. He giveth to all men liberally* *and* simply, freely, largely, and single-heartedly, *and upbraideth not,* *Jam. 1. 5.* He seeks not to enrich himself, but to enrich his patient. Oh Sirs! is not here a physician for your turn? where can you find another that so exactly and fully suits your condition? surely those that have nothing to give had need have to do with one, that looks for nothing. But do I say, he looks for nothing? nay, mistake not; he must have that, which, it may be, you are too loath to part with. Yet I must tell thee, he looks for nothing, but what will undo thee unless thou throw away. Thy physician asks but for that cup of poyson which is in thy hand; that gangreen'd limb, that foul cancer, that greedy wen, which thou must part with, or with thy life; he will have thee but to wash, and put away thy filthiness of flesh and spirit, and thou shalt be clean; put off thy raggs, and thou shalt have his robes. What he asks will not enrich him to receive, but it will enrich thee to give.

4. *In that he prescribes no such course that his patient may justly distast.* Nay, no other than he may find the greatest pleasure and sweetness in. The bitterest cup the physician himself takes of, and yet (which is a divine Mystery)

stery) the virtue of it effectually communicated to the patient : here's the riddle of love ! the physician is bruised, and the patient thereby healed, the physician bleeds, and the patient recovers ; in a word, the physician dies, and the patient thereby obtains life. His own blood is both the purge and the cordial ; his own flesh the physick and the food for his sick patient. The creditor pays the debt, and the debtor is discharg'd. The captain wins the field, and the souldier divides the spoil, and wears the garland. The master bears the burden and heat of the day, and the servant receives the wages.

4. We are next to consider the *course* that this Physician takes to effect this cure ; which brings us to the last proposition, which is this.

*Prop. 3. Prop. That the onely way to be effectually healed is to turn to that God who alone is able to do it.*

Here I shall speak to the last thing promised on the second proposition, *viz.* The way that God takes to work this cure, wherein we find something to be done on *Gods* part, and something on *mans*.

- I. 1. On *Gods* part ; where we are to consider  
On what Terms.  
In what Way.  
By what Means.

- I. 1. On what *terms* will God heal the back-sliders of his people.

*Obj.*



*Obj. Terms!* may you say; did you not tell *Obj.* us, he would do it freely?

*Ans.* For the fuller answer to this, I shall *Ans.* shew you which the *terms* are, and how they consist with free grace. The gospel (as one says) hath *triplicem vocem, a threefold voice.* Believe, repent and bring forth fruit meet for repentance; all which we have exprest in these two scriptures, *Mar. 1. 5.* and *Matth. 3. 8.*

1. *Believe.* This is the grand condition of the gospel, and sometimes taken comprehensively of all the rest, *Joh. 3. 15, 16, 18.* But there are these two things that essentially constitute a justifying saving faith. *Credence* and *relyance*, or assent and consent.

1. *The credence* or assent of faith, which is the historical believing of revealed truths; that there is a God; that the scriptures are his word, and therefore true, &c. which is by some call'd a dogmatical faith, or bare credence. Thus the devils believe and tremble, and this faith is common to the hypocrite and formalist; though, I think, there is never an hypocrite in the world that hath so perfect, clear and full a credence of revealed truths, as the devils have. Yet this is the first act essentially and necessarily belonging to a saving faith, a credence there must be, though this be not all. And who dares say that this doth any way derogate from the freeness of grace? wilt thou apply thy self to any man, in a concern-

ment of thy bodily health, whom thou dost not take to be a physician, and believest to be one that hath skill in such a case as thine is? or doth this belief (though requir'd as a condition) make the cure ever the less free?

2. *The reliance* or consent of faith; which is the *proprium quarto modo*, the life and soul of a justifying faith. The souls choosing of and resting on Christ for its onely and all sufficient Saviour and Lord. This includes the former as the greater includes the less. Faith must enter by the judgment, and thence descend to the will and affections; and this is that union and covenant between Christ and the soul, wherein each makes himself over to the other. The soul freely and faithfully casts itself on Christ, and fully resigns up all to him, as its alone Saviour and supreme Governour. Lord I see that I am undone, my wound is incurable, and refuseth to be healed by any other hand than thine. I know, if thou wilt, thou canst make me clean; yea, and thou hast proclaimed thy readiness to do it; thou hast pass'd thy sacred and unchangeable word for it. I dare not mistrust that there can be any thing wanting in thy power, or will to fullfill thy word to thy servant; therefore in conscience of my own wretchedness, and confidence of thine allsufficiency and faithfulness, I prostrate myself at thy feet, resolving through the divine assistance of thy grace, forever to cleave

cleave and adhere to thee alone, to heal all my diseases; and that in thine own way and on thine own terms. Well! says Christ, if thou art but in earnest in what thou here professest; if thou wilt indeed rouse thy self on me, and submit to the course which I must take with thee, if ever thou be healed; and faithfully follow my directions; I will ingage and covenant with thee to perfect the cure. It is nothing that I expect of thee, but obedience to that course, which must be taken or thou must dy. The physick I send thee, I send freely, I expect not of thee so much as what it cost me; it cost me dear, it shall cost thee nothing, but the hearty accepting, and faithful using it. If thou wilt beat the trouble of the cure (which shall be no more than is absolutely necessary neither) I will be at the charge. But when it is done, I hope thou wilt love and thank me; nay, lest this should seem too much, I will also give thee an heart both to love and to thank. And whatever thou hast in thy heart to bestow, in testimony of thy love, on any of my servants, thy companions in the world, that may have need of thy gifts (for thy goodness extendeth not to me). I will first as freely give it thee, or it shall not be expected of thee. Now Sirs! what think you? is not this free grace? would you be healed on easier terms? *Be not afraid, onely believe, Mar.* 5. 36. cast the care of the business on me, trust

me with it, and all shall be well. This is the direct act, the spirit and life of a saving faith. How miserably (and mischievously) are they mistaken, that confound faith with assurance, or rather a blind and soul-deluding presumption; that tell men that faith in Jesus Christ, is to believe their own particular right to him, and to life and salvation by him. As if to doubt of this were the onely damning infidelity. Whence it would follow, that the most blind and presumptuous have the strongest faith; and those that are most wary and jealous of themselves, the veriest infidels.

Now this *reliance* of faith hath these three things in Christ to act on: his

**Attributes.**

**Promises.**

**Offices.**

*His attributes:* and that either as God, or as Mediator.

*As God:* For in him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily, Coloss. 2:9.

The power, wisdom, goodness, mercy, and truth of a God. Here is the rock for faith to anchor

and act on. The everlasting foundation; he is God, as well as man. Fear not then: Believe

*onely and thou shalt be made whole.* Thou hast

to do not with flesh and blood; but with him,

by whom the worlds were made; who is the brightness of the glory of God; and the express image of his person, and who upholdeth

all things by the word of his power, that is infinitely more than sufficient to right all that is, or can be amiss, with so poor a worm, as thou art. Were he indeed but a creature thou mightst well despair; but he *being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God*, Phil. 2. 6. Equal in all respects, because one and the same with him; only allowing the distinction of personal properties. As God is Eternal, so is Christ, 1 Tim. 6. 16. *Who only hath immortality dwelling in light, which no man can approach unto. The ancient of days*, Dan. 7. 20. *The Alpha and Omega*, Rev. 1. 8. As God is Almighty, so is Christ. *The mighty God, the everlasting Father*, Isa. 9. 6. *The power of God, and the wisdom of God*, 1 Cor. 1. 24. As God is all-sufficient, so is Christ; *Who filleth all in all*, Ephes. 1. 23. *And of his fulness we all receive, grace for grace*, John 1. 6. As God is love, so is Christ: Nay, 'tis in him, and through him, that all the streams of Divine Love do flow. In him that all the promises of love are yea and Amen. But what need we mention any more? Come my Brethren, here's your Rock, out with your Anchor; fasten on him, who is a God mighty to save. I do this day solemnly proclaim to you the glad tidings of the Gospel of the grace of God. Ho! all ye blind, and halt, and deaf; all ye diseased, wounded, crippled, whoever hath need of a Physician; rich and poor, young

*Not this*



and old, Princes and Peasants, assemble yourselves, and come; yea, let the dead hear: you that lie rotting and stinking in your graves of sin, that lie bound hand and foot in the winding-sheet of a self-deceiving security, nail'd up in the coffin of a seared Conscience, and intomb'd in the strong marble of an impenitent Spirit; ye dry bones that lie withered and scattered up and down the world; hear ye the word of the Lord, break open your Graves, shake off your Dust, arise and come away; here's life from the dead, health from sickness, strength from weakness, a medicine for every malady, and a supply for all wants. The *Fountain* of Grace, the *Kings Bath* is opened, even for all the *Lepers* of the earth, that will but repair hither and step in that they may be healed. Harken all ye poor forlorn souls, and leap for joy; there is *Balm* found in God's *Gilead*; there is a Physician there: the Sun of Righteousness is risen with healing in his wings. O Sirs! why will you not be healed? why will you not be happy, while you may? Were I speaking to those that are naturally dead, I could not rationally expect that they should listen or regard what I say; but I speak to those that have eyes to see, and ears to hear, and hearts to understand, and reason to act, and consciences to hearken, if they were but willing. Oh! why will you not be perswaded? once more! come try  
your

your Physician; if you repent it in the other world, I will be content to be damned for you: nay, if you repent not of your refusal, I will repent in your stead. Come! be not ashamed, nor afraid; he is pitiful and gracious, tender-hearted, and tender-handed: never did a soul yet miscarry under him, nor after him, that would but berul'd by him. I dare adventure life for life, and soul for soul, that all shall be well, and according to your own hearts content; and that you shall your selves freely thank, and bless, and love him for the severest and most displeasing course he shall take with you. What sayest thou now? wilt thou resolve before thou readeſt any further? or doſt thou tell me in thy heart, thou haſt no need of this Phyſician? If this be thy mind, I cannot but tremble for thee, to think of thy caſe. *Solomon* tells thee, *there is more hope of a* Prov. 26. 12. *fool*; and *Chriſt* himſelf, that *there is more* Math. 21. 31. *hope of Publicans and Harlots than of thee.* But ſuppoſe thou art one, on whom this Phyſician hath done ſomething in order to a cure, haſt thou no farther need of his help? Art thou as perfectly well as ever thou hopeſt or deſireſt to be? as humble, as holy, as ſtrong in Grace, as like to thy heavenly Father, as thou needeſt to be? Were it ſo indeed, thou wert fitter for Heaven than for this Earth: nor would God be ſo unmerciful, as to hold thee any longer in this Peſt-houſe. Oh! let not thy proud heart charge

charge God so foolishly. But if thou hast indeed been with this Physician, and gotten some acquaintance with him, and interest in him, hold it up, and improve it both for thy self and thy friends. If thou art converted strengthen thy Brethren, commend him to all that thou knowest; get him as many Patients as thou canst. O! pity thy diseased Family; commiserate thy dying friends; follow them with all importunity; urge them with thy Arguments; encourage them by thy experience; leave them not half-resolv'd. Wilt thou not be as merciful to thy Brethren, as *Dives* was in Hell? *Luke* 16. 27, 28. Take them up into thy bosom, lead them by the hand; the *Kings Evil* is upon them, that *Evil*, which none but the King of Kings can heal; lay them at his feet, beg him, as for thy own soul; that he would stretch forth his healing hand over them, and perfect the work both on thy self and them, and instruct them daily on all occasions, in all those counsels and courses wherein he hath instructed thee.

2. *As Mediator.* Here is an All-sufficiency.

1. *Of Power*, and that both authoritative and executive. His Authority is unquestionable; his Commission is under the Broad-Seal of Heaven: *I have set my King upon my holy hill of Sion; I will declare the decree: thou art my Son, this day have I begotten thee,*

*Psalm*

*Psalm 2. 6, 7. I the Lord have called thee in righteousness, and given thee for a covenant of the people, for a light of the Gentiles, Isa. 42. 6. Him hath God exalted to be a Prince and a Saviour, Acts 5. 31. All power is given unto me in Heaven and in Earth, Matth. 28. 18. And him hath God the Father sealed, John 6. 27. His Authority is attested, not only by verbal, but real evidence. Though ye believe not me, believe the works, John 10. 38. And as is his ἐξουσία Authority, such is his δύναμις Power, to heal: able to save to the uttermost. Power to forgive, Matth. 9. 6. and Power to renew; to remove all obstructions, subdue all oppositions, and communicate all necessary influences. He maketh his people willing in the day of his power, Psal. 110. 3. He hath the Key of hearts to open and shut at his pleasure; as the Consciences of all his called ones can testify, who may record the wonders he hath done for their souls.*

2. *Of Merit.* He was offered once for all. *One Sacrifice for sins forever, Heb. 10. 10, & 12. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased, Matth. 3. 17. What fuller testimony! Justice it self acknowledges it self satisfied, the debt is paid, and the release sealed. Who is he that condemneth? it is Christ that died, Rom. 8. 34. And that you may not doubt that it is sufficient only for his Elect, he tells you, John 3. 16. That God so loved the world, that*

that he is his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. And 1 John 2. 2. He is the propitiation for our sins, and not for ours only, but also for the sins of the whole world. The Redemption is universal, *Sufficienter*; though, through the unbelief, impenitency and pride of the greater part of mankind it prove not so *Efficienter*.

3. 3. Of Mercy. He is a merciful High-Priest, Heb. 2. 17. *That is touched with the feeling of our infirmities*, Chap. 4. 15. That sympathizeth with his Patient, and knows how to succour them that are tempted. The Leper under the Law was to be shut up, or shut out all the time of his Leprosie, and at his re-admission to be sprinkled with Blood; and to wash and shave himself. But this merciful High-Priest goes out without the Camp; and visits them, makes his own bosom their Hospital; sprinkles and washes them in his own Blood, even as many as cast themselves on him, and brings them in in his arms, and sets them in the house of God, to offer the Sacrifices of Praise and Thanksgiving. This is that *Tree of Life, whose leaves are for the healing of the Nations*, Rev. 22. 2. *I am the Lord that healeth thee*, Exod. 15. 26. Oh! how sweet a word is a *Mediator*, to those that apprehend themselves ready to perish by the hands of one that is infinitely too hard for them, and most intol-

Lev. 13. 46.  
+ 14. 8, 9.



intollerably provok'd by them? A *Redeemer* to those that are sold and without hope, under a cruel and insufferable slavery: A *Healer* to those that lie at the point of death, under the most torturous and loathsome Disease. *Having such an High-Priest, let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need, Heb. 4. 16.*

2. *His Promises.* Without which indeed 2. his *Attributes* were of little consolation. All the promises in Scripture are Christ's promises, granted for his sake, sealed in his blood, founded on his right, and applied by his Spirit. These are the full breasts of consolation; Faith's *Asyla, Cities of Refuge*; the glorious spangles with which the Heavens of the Scriptures are bescattered. *A new heart will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you; and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh: And I will put my Spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments and do them, Ezek. 36. 26, 27. Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat, yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price, Isa. 55. 1. Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be as wool, Isa. 1. 18. Come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest, Matth. 11. 28.*

*And*

*And him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out, John 6. 37. And as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the Sons of God, even to them that believe in his name, John 1. 12. And if children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joynt-heirs with Christ, Rom .8. 17. God's patients are become his children, and his children his heirs, heirs to a kingdom, and a crown incorruptible and inviolate. O Faith! where are thy eagle-wings? mount up above this cloudy region of sense and reason; recreate thy self in this fragrant air, take thy fill of these divine cordials: how canst thou but be ravish'd with these blisful visions? Is not every promise like a box of spikenard, exceeding precious? O sinner, *Be of good comfort, rise, he calleth thee.* He that is both Truth and Power hath pass'd his word to thee, and ingag'd his heavenly Father for thee, and allowed thee to make bold with his name at the throne of grace, and to plead his right as confidently as if it were thine own. *Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, John 14. 13. In whom we have boldness and access with confidence by the Faith of him, Eph. 3. 12.* What meanest thou then to sit here? Why wilt thou perish so near thy Saviour? What are the terms thou stickest at? Wherein doth he seem unreasonable to thee? Is not that free enough, which thou mayest have, if thou art but thoroughly willing, without money,*

*Mark 10. 49.*

ney, and without price? Dost thou expect to be saved against thy will? how then couldest thou thank him, or take it as a favour? wilt thou say thou canst not make thy self willing, and therefore he requires an impossibility? doth not the shame of this excuse fly back in thy own face? is this thy weakness, or thy wickedness? what canst thou in reason expect should be done for thee, if thou willfully refuseth the grace that is offered thee? weakness is to be pittied; but willfulness is inexcusable.

3. *His offices.* As prophet, priest and king. 3. I shall not speak of these distinctly, the general sum and end of them being but this, *viz.* the collection, conservation and consummation of his church. This is the work that he was delegated and designed to before the foundations of the world; and which he hath been executing ever since the promise was first made in paradise. *He is anointed with the holy-Ghost and with power to heal all that are oppressed, Act. 10. 38.* This was the great errand on which he came into the world, in the fulness of time, when he actually took our nature upon him. *Thou shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins, Matth. 1. 21.* Come then! learn to act thy faith on this glorious name, and plead it thus with him. Lord thou art the Jesus, to save thy people from their sins, that is thy *name*, and this is thine *office*. Blessed Jesus! for thy sacred  
name

name and office sake; save me from my sin.  
Be my physician, heal my backslidings. Into  
thy hands, Lord, I humbly, fully, freely,  
gladly, believingly resign my self. On thee  
will I wait. Do thine office on me. Take  
thine own course with me. Far be it from  
thine undone worm to capitulate with, or to  
prescribe to the allwise, allgracious and  
almighty God. *Lord I believe; help my un-  
belief.*

2. 2. The second grand condition of the go-  
spell, whereon grace is freely tendered to sin-  
ners, is *repentance*. Wherein there are those  
two things eminently and essentially implied.  
A putting off the old man { Eph. 4. 22. 24.  
A putting on the new { comp.

1. 1. *A putting off the old man.* The new tes-  
tament hath these two words to express *repen-  
tance* by, μεταμέλεια which signifies the  
trouble and anxiety of the mind, arising from  
the sense of guilt; and fear of punishment.  
Thus Judas is said to repent, *Match. 27. 3.*  
Though this be included in *repentance* as a part  
of it, yet is, in itself, no more than what is  
common with hypocrites; but that true re-  
pentance, on which the grace of the gospel is  
granted, is called μετάνοια, which is the  
change of the mind. The soul becomes of an-  
other judgment, of other affections and other  
inclinations; of another mind than it was  
wont to be. The whole man is changed; his  
thoughts,

μεταμέ-  
λεια.

thoughts, his words, his purposes, his disposition, his delights, his sorrows, his company, his conversation, and, in a word, his whole nature passes under a moral change, from darkness to light, from death to life, yea, from life to death. *I was alive without the law once, but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died, and the commandment which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death, Rom. 7. 8, 10.* This is your physicians course, my brethren, he kills that he may cure, and that in a threefold sence.

I. *The patient must dy in his own apprehension*, that is, must be made sensible of that death he hath deserv'd to dy, and is condemn'd unto by the righteous sentence of the law of God. And of that spiritual death too, under which he is held by the law of sin; from which sence, there cannot but arise a terror and anguish of soul, which is a kind of death to it, *a crucifixion, Gal. 5. 24. And they that are Christs have crucified the flesh with its affections and lusts.* This is the sharpest inward pain that the patient is put to; when the physick begins to work by repentance, it makes him heart-sick, till the new nature get the victory, and begin to outstrive, and free it self of that mass of corruption, from whence those agonies of soul do proceed. Hence are those unutterable groans and mournful complaints. O wretched man that I am I who



shall deliver me from the body of this death Lord! was there ever a heart like mine? was ever wretch so impenitent, so proud, so worldly, so ignorant, so unbelieving; so impatient, so hypocritical, so every way unclean as I! Oh! the precious hours and weeks and years, that I have triff'd and sinn'd away! oh the many sabbaths that I have prophan'd! oh the prayers and duties that I have mock'd with God in! oh the convictions that I have smother'd! the love that I have slighted and resisted! the authority that I have rebelled against! the patience that I have tryed and even tired! and the wretched soul that I have undone! how do the swelling waves of sin and guilt now overwhelm me, and the boystrous floods of mine iniquities bury me in the depths of misery! oh my soul! where art thou become? unfaithful conscience! how is it, that thou durst so long hold thy peace? hardest of hearts! how is it, that thou wouldst not break till now? blind mind! whence is it, that thou hast so long loved thy darkness? stubborn will! what did possess thee, that the warnings and arguments of love should make no more impression on thee? vile affections! on what harlots have you spent your strength? was I of no kin to you, that you have all thus conspir'd against me? and now that I am undone, what can you do for me? where are the pleasures of sin now? where is that happiness

you

you promised me? that sweet you were fota-  
ken with? where is the righteousness you boas-  
ted of, and the duties and hopes you would  
justify me with? what! never a hand now to  
save a sincking soul? never a word to comfort  
a dying friend? ah! the gall and wormwood  
that I am plung'd in! what a cup of trembling  
have you put into my hand! Sirs! thus it, ma-  
ny times, fares with returning prodigals, when  
they begin to come to themselves, and con-  
science to work within them, They can't  
sleep, nor eat, nor walk, nor talk in peace, but  
their hearts are ready to burst within them;  
nay, were it not for some secret cordials, in-  
sensibly breath'd in from the Father of mer-  
cies, the spirit would fail, and break out into a  
hellish madness and despair. And no won-  
der it is thus; there is a battle fought in the  
soul; Christ comes in to conquer, and that a  
mortal enemy; and this cannot be done with-  
out blows and wounds; yea, all the forces of  
the soul rise in arms against him, under Satan  
who is the governour of the fort; all these re-  
solve to dy on the place before they yield; no  
wonder then that there are these struggles. It  
is with the soul in this case, as with the child  
that was possess'd of a dumb spirit. *Mar. 9.*  
*26.* When Christ came to cast him out *the spi-*  
*rit cried, and rent him sore, and came out of him,*  
*and he was as one dead.* But now, is there any  
thing in all this that derogates from free grace?

if this condition seem hard, blame thy self, not thy physician, who is neither profited nor pleased by it. The physick must work according to the disease; or thou must be left incurable. Yet if this will not satisfy thee, go ask any of those that have experimentally past under these horrors of conscience, whether they think the grace of God ever the less free, for that they could not obtain it without repentance?

*Obj.* *Obj.* But you may say, we find the people of God, those that we think have truly repented, are still complaining and doubting of their conditions; always groaning under their burden; so that this is like to be a very caseless and perpetual yoke upon us.

*Ans.* I. *Ans.* I. Why! suppose it were so; canst thou dream that it will be easier to endure everlasting burnings? what are the pains of repentance to the pains of hell! and what is this life to eternity? what if thou wert sure never to see one merry hour more in the world, if thou once turn in truth to Christ? speak soberly, wouldst thou choose rather to be damn'd? dost thou not think that those in hell would account and acknowledge it as an act of rich and free grace, if their torments there might be made as short, as the remaining days of thy life here? I could tell thee at large, the vast difference between a life of repentance here, and an eternity of repentance hereafter. Oh!

that

that thy own wilfulness may never teach thee the difference by experience!

2. It may be, those that thou hearest always thus complaining and doubting are such, as never yet made thorow work of their repentance. This is a common case with the hypocrites; they love to whine, and tell sad stories of themselves, which proceeds, many times, not from any real sence of what they complain of; but out of design that they may seem humble and penitent and tender-hearted, and be pittied of others. Yet oftentimes it may proceed from real fears and doubts of their conditions; their guilty consciences do accuse them, as well they may, while they secretly hold fast some beloved lust or other, which they will not let go. And to salve these inward fears, they will either take up some stricter course in the external part of religion, or be the frequenter or more pathetical in uttering their griefs to others, which is some kind of relief to them, and the rather, because by this means they procure the good opinion of such as cannot see their hearts, and have words of comfort imprudently, though charitably, suggested to them. Now if these be the persons thou meanest, I deny that ever they truly repented. They are like the sow, always whining, and yet always in the mire, and returning to her draught.

3. 'Tis true, those that are sincere, have 3.

matter enough to complain of too; but this proceeds from their own unwatchfulness and security, or self-love. We are all naturally too fond of our selves, loath to displease the flesh, and so through our sinful self-indulgence, slothfulness or incogitancy, we often relapse into our old distempers, which occasions the return of our old sorrows. Though true repentance gives sin a mortal wound, yet it doth not presently dy; but lies a gasping and a struggling (in some more and in some less, according as they prosecute their victory) while we are here in the flesh. By this means the people of God themselves do too often make void their repentance, that is, in the comforts, evidence and visible effects of it. When they shall go on their knees & repent of past miscarriages, & by and by their foot is in the snare again; thus they creat themselves new sorrows.

4. On this account, repentance is a duty that is to run parallel with our lives. This great physick keeps his patient in a course of physick, because the disease is rooted and hereditary, and therefore, by so much the more apt to return on occasion of the least advantage. Every day makes new work for repentance. As was the baptism of John, so is this of Christ a *baptism of repentance*.

*Obj. Object.* But hath not Christ died once for all, and thereby fully discharg'd his Elect of all their sins, past, present, and to come? but  
if



if sin be pardoned, what need Repentance?

*Ans.* 1. 'Tis true, the Redemption purchased by Christ is complete Redemption, he hath paid the utmost farthing, he hath pass'd an act of Indemnity, and sealed it in his blood, for all the sins of his Elect, both past, present, & to come: their sins are pardon'd in the court of Heaven, even before they are committed.

2. But it is very improper with men to say that a sin is actually pardon'd before it is committed: A person must be guilty before he is capable of a pardon, and the sin must be committed before the person can be impleaded guilty: But in Christ, and by him the full price is paid, and Justice satisfied once for all; though this general pardon cannot be particularly exhibited and applied till the sin be committed, and the Gospel-condition of forgiveness performed, which is a penitent confession. So that though Regeneration be a *Laver*, wherein we are wash'd once for all, Repentance is a *Laver* wherein we are to wash daily, because we sin daily.

3. This objection seems to be founded on a gross mistake, as if Repentance had only a mercenary respect unto Justification: Whereas God hath appointed it for a means (*apud nos*) of our Justification: and therefore called it *Repentance from dead works*, and must continue until we are perfectly sanctified; which cannot be until Grace be swallowed up in Glory.

4. 4. How slavish and base a spirit is this, for a person to repent of sin, only for his own sake, and not for God's? which indeed is not to hate it, but to fear it. Why? who is there more offended with sin than he that hath some good grounds to hope that his sin is pardoned? Who more jealous? Who more tender? Who more griev'd at the new acts of it? Should you tell such a one he need repent no more, he cannot believe you: Should you tell him he ought not, he cannot obey you. When he reflects on his miscarriages, and looks on him whom he hath pierced, and grieved, and dishonoured, he cannot but mourn, though his tears be mixt with joys. Nay, the clearer he sees his pardon, and the more he loves his Redeemer, the more he hates sin, and mourns for it, and flees from it.

5. 5. But he that makes this objection seems to tell me, that he is perfect, and *cannot sin*. As for such, I have no more to say here, but refer them to what hath been said already, and desire them to learn more modesty and humility, and better to understand the Scriptures of truth, and their own false hearts, and to remember who hath taught them to pray daily, *Forgive us our sins*, Luke 11. 4.

5. 5. Though the terrors and anguish of Conscience in the first work of Repentance (especially after relapses) be great; yet being once justified of God, there is a standing settled peace

peace in the Soul; some secret supports under all their godly sorrow. Though the Sun be clouded, it shall never set upon them more. Though it be a sad and rainy day, yet it is day; and surely there is a vast difference between the Saints darkest day, and the Hypocrites brightest night. Though the Soul spend her self in tears, yet she rejoiceth that she hath tears to spend. On these waters she sees her Saviour; though to her trouble, yet to her comfort too. Shee feels those fingers on the *handles of the lock*, from whence her tears, like the Spouses *sweet smelling myrrhe* do drop. The world can judge but by the countenance, and see no further than the out-side; they account it a sad, melancholy, discontented, peevish kind of life; but alas their eyes can pierce no deeper than the skin: They are strangers to that inward spiritual joy, where-with all these bitters are sweetned. My Brethren! believe it; nay, if you know what true Repentance means, you can witness it, that there is more true and real joy, peace and comfort in this breaking of the heart before God, in these soul-afflicting and self-abasing duties, than in the most voluptuous pampering or pleasing of the flesh, or purchasing great Estates, Names, or Preferments in the world. Well then! have no hard thoughts of this part of your Physicians course. Don't complain it is hard, till you have try'd it.

2. 2. *The Patient must die in all his carnal hopes. Ashur shall not save us, we will not ride upon horses, neither will we say any more to the work of our hands, Ye are our Gods; for in thee the fatherless findeth mercy, Hos. 14. 3. Then see what follows, I will heal their back slidings, I will love them freely, for mine anger is turned away from him, Ver. 4. Ashur shall not, and good reason, for we see he cannot save us. Behold, we come unto thee, say they in my Text, for thou art the Lord our God. Truly in vain is salvation hoped for from the Hills, and from the Mountains; that is, from the Idols, and false Gods they had set up and worshipped in those places. Truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of Israel. So it is said of the Remnant that should escape, Isa. 10. 20. They shall no more again stay themselves upon him that smote them, [that is the King of Assyria] but shall stay upon the Lord, the holy one of Israel in truth. Sirs! believe it before it be too late; your carnal confidences do but smite, and wound, and deceive, and slay you. They are reeds that pierce through the hands of those that lean on them. Therefore shall a man look to his maker, and not to the Altars, the work of his hands, Isa. 17. 7, 8. To God, and not to creatures; to Christ, and not to self. Our own righteousness and duties are as vain things for justification, as a horse is for safety; which cannot deliver by his great strength, Psal. 33. 17. Therefore*

Jer. 3. 23,  
23.

2 Chron. 28.  
20.

fore our soul waiteth for the Lord, he is our help and our shield, Ver. 20. My Brethren? there is a greater mystery in this truth, and a greater difficulty in this duty, than most men are aware. There is no sin in the world more natural to fallen man, than to deifie himself, and to affect and conceit an absolute self-sufficiency; though there be but few but have learn'd to profess the contrary. There is no duty so hard, because none so præter- and supernat-  
 ral, as self-denial. How hard a matter is it for men of great learning and wisdom, to deny their own carnal reason? *This is the stone that was set at nought by you builders. What will this babler say?* said the Philosophers of *Paul*, when he was preaching Christ to the Atheni-  
 ans. The wisdom of God, and the power of the Gospel is but foolishness, in the conceit of the flesh. How hard a case is it for men of great moral endowments, to deny their own righteousness and religious performances, and wholly to rely on the precarious and imputed righteousness of another. *For they being ignorant of Gods righteousness, go about to establish their own righteousness.* How ungrateful a task is it for men of great interests and alliances, & aspiring minds, to deny themselves in their honours, favours, and preferments. *In this thing the Lord pardon thy servant, that when my master goeth into the house of Rimmon to worship there, and he leaneth on my hand, and I bow*

*AR. 4. 11.*

*AR. 17. 18.*

*Rom. 10. 3.*

*2 Kings 9. 18.*



*I bow my self in the house of common.* What a kind of torment is it, for one that is troubled with a flashy wit, to deny his jokes and quibbles. I have heard of some that would rather chuse to lose their friend than their jest; and too many, that have not been able to forbear their prophane humor, while they have been engag'd in the most solemn acts of divine worship; yea, and of some, that the very sense of approaching death, nor the grim looks of the gallows, on which they were presently to end their wretched life, have not been able to make them serious. What a grief is it to the sluggard to deny himself in his ease? or the wanton in his lascivious looks or thoughts? Oh how hard is it to reduce fallen man to God? fain would he be his own *Alpha* and *Omega*. If at any time he find himself so distressed, that he must needs seek some where or other for help; away he goes, any whither, rather than to God: to *Ashur*, to *Egypt*, to *Affyria*, to King *Jareb*, his confederates; to his silver and gold, to his horses, to his tavern and stews; any whither rather than to God. Or if he be defeated in all these, and must to God at last, he invents a way of his own, his own form to pray and to worship in, his own humors or carnal interests must authorize and shape his devotions for him, as the Prophet says of *Moadab*, *Ila. 15. 2.* *He is gone to Bajith and to Dibon, the*

*the high places to weep.* Chap. 16. 12. *It shall come to pass, when it is seen that Moab is weary on the high places, that he shall come to his sanctuary to pray, but he shall not prevail.* First to the high-places of his Idolatry, then to the sanctuary of *Chemosh* his grand Idol: from one vain course to another, till abused patience be turned into fury, and there be no way to escape.

3. *The Soul must die to all sinful suggestions and temptations; for ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God,* Col. 3. 3. Dead, that is analogically and morally dead. Dead to sin, to self, and to the world. These words are the argument of the former, *Set your affections on things above.* τὰ ἄνω φρονεῖτε, the same word that's us'd, Rom. 8. 5. *set your minds and hearts on, favour of, be wise in, exercise your judgments, care, and zeal about the things above; those spiritual things that relate to your eternal peace, that are of a more sublime, heavenly, and spiritual nature and tendency, than those droffie vanities of this lower world.* *For ye are dead; similes estis mortuis.* *Pisc. in loc.* Ye are like those that are dead; and that not only by your obnoxiousness to the scorn and abuses of the world, as dead men are, that cannot defend themselves; but dead as to your fleshy desires and affections. Dead men are not taken nor tempted with any of those ensnating pleasures of the world, nor mov'd

mov'd or griev'd at the troubles or perturbations of it. Offer what you will to a dead man, he takes no notice of you. Now thus the Apostle reasons here, you profess to be risen with Christ; but if you are risen with him, it must needs be, that you were dead and buried with him, for resurrection is not but of those that have been once dead; and this also is no more than you profess, having received the sacramental symbole or sign of it in your *baptism*, as he says *chap. 2. 12.* buried with him in baptism. Therefore mortify your members which are upon the earth, fornication, uncleanness, &c. that is those evil affections and corrupt inclinations of the flesh, which are as so many limbs and members of that body of sin. Yea, and as many as are sincere, are thus dead, at least *inchoative*, in some degrees, though not perfectly; therefore mortify them more and more, pursue your victory, till you find temptations to be but as sparks struck into the sea; your hearts steeld against all these fiery darts, and that loathsome sink of your natures become as a fountain of gardens. Tell me now is there any thing yet in all this that is not consistent with free grace? is the cure ever the less free, because thy physician will not suffer thee to forsake him, and to run to those *Quacks* and impostors, that will certainly both beggar and bury thee? nor to gratify thy longing appetite in that which he knows to be

hurt-

hurtful for thee. Now this is the first work of repentance; a putting off.

2. There must be also a putting on. But now you also put off all these - - and have put on the new man, Col. 3. 8. 10. Where we must observe

The Order.

The Matter.

1. The order. We must first put off before we put on.

The change that must be here wrought, is not the superinducing of a new external form on the old principles; but a change of natures; that is, a moral, though not a physical change.

'Tis not the dawbing of an old wall, but the building of a new; not the painting of the sepulcher, but the raising of the dead; not the attiring of a courtezan, to act a part in a play; but the adorning of a chaste spouse for her bride-chamber. Sirs! the work of conversion to God is no patching work.

The old walls must down, and the new work be set on a new foundation. As in our falling from God, we first put off the image of our Creator, and then put on the image of Satan, put of the beauty, dignity and power of holiness, and put on the deformity, slavery and impotency of sin; so in our return to God, we must first put off that, which in our fall we put on, and put on what we then put off.

Which is renewed in knowledge after the image of him that created him, Coloss. 3. 10. This is the

practical mistake of too many in the world, they would be thought to put on Christ, but never duly think of putting off self. Oh! if men could but put on Christ, as the stage-player puts on his cloak, or a son of the church his surplice, the pretended embleme of his sanctity, which beautifies all to the eye, be there what there will under; this would like them well.

*Look strip*

Any but sinner, I must tell thee, thou must resolve on another course. The wedding garment will never sit well on thy old filthy course raggs. Thou must strip off every old thread, if thou wilt have on the new. If any man be in Christ he is a new creature. Old things are past away, behold all things are become new, 2 Cor. 5. 17. Thou must off with thy old thoughts, and away with thy old affections, thy old customs, thy old companions, thy old conversation. All things must be new; new eyes, new ears, a new tongue, a new heart, a new will, a new creature both within and without; the old body indeed, but a new soul; yet not physically, but morally and spiritually new. These leopard-spots, this Ethiopian blackness must off, though it cost thee thy very skin; that when Christ hath clothed thee, he may rejoyce in thee.

2. *sw 2.* The manner or what it is thou must put on. The Apostle tells you in a word, Rom. 13. 14. Put ye on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill the lusts thereof.



of. Christ only is the garment that will fill the dimensions and necessities of the poor naked soul; all other coverings are too short and too narrow and too weak and too base. Christ alone is he that answers all the ends of cloathing. Therefore put on Christ and whole Christ, and he will be useful to you these three ways especially.

1. *For service.* He will not onely provide you work, but cloaths to work in, and tools to work with, and these such as shall be suitable to the work he calls you to; nay, and such as shall make your work easy and pleasant. He will cloath you with knowledge for works that require skill; with patience for works of hard labour; with faith for works of discouraging difficulty; with charity for relative duties; prudence for works of intricacy; and humility for service of high attempt. Besides we might tell you that the meanest of these garments is of more value than all the treasures of the Indies. Their exact and adequate fitness for us; their unsearchable and divine qualities; their everlasting durableness; and that price that was paid on the cross to purchase them for us, may inform us something of their worth. Yet as rich and costly as they are, they are but your working cloaths, every-days apparel, to labour in, both in wet and heat. When your Sabbath and jubilee is come, he hath yet other manner of ornaments

for you. And I must tell you, 'tis the labourer onely that hath this provision made for him, not the loyterer. *Drowsiness shall cloath a man with raggs.* Prov. 33. 21.

2. 2. *For safety.* He will not send thee forth to deal with bryars and thorns, with thy bare hands. He knows he hath some hard work for thee, and therefore will cloath thee accordingly. Doth he call thee forth as a souldier? he will arm thee for safety, as well as for service; he will lead thee to his magazeen, and put thee on the helmet of salvation, the breastplate of righteousness, and the shield of faith, arms defensive as well as offensive, *Eph. 6. 13.* &c. Christ himself is as thy coat of mail, thy shield and buckler; and Sirs! believe it, he is a shield impenetrable, though he suffered his side to be goar'd on the cross, it was in our defense that he sustained the wounds, and there he brake the head of the spear and gloriously triumphed over death it self, and warded that blow, which we must also have sunk under; there he died indeed, and yet ever liveth to make intercession for us.

3. 3. *For dignity.* It is a right princely robe; the richest attire that ever was worn among men is but a dark shadow of this spiritual dignity. *Who is she that looketh forth as the morning, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners,* Cant. 6. 10. *Vir- tus est sola nobilitas.* Grace is the onely true nobility.

bility. *The kings daughter is all glorious within, her cloathing is of wrought gold, Psal. 45. 13.* See how the returning prodigal is entertain'd, *Luk. 15. 22. Bring forth the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet.* Now if this be the working cloaths, what will the festivals be? If this be the harness, what will the crown and the lawrel be? when God shall set himself to cloath thee with honor.

3. The third great condition of the gospel 3. is *new obedience*, and this new obedience must have

New Principles.

New Objects.

New Subjects.

1. *New principles.* The new obedience 1. will never spring from the old principles. *Es-ther make the tree good and his fruit good, or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt, Matth. 12. 33.* The old principles are like the old dead stump in the earth, that brings forth nothing, but the toad-stools of dead works; or the wild olive-stock, that bears none but wild fruit. 'Tis not the statelines of the tree, but the fruit that God regards; nor yet the beauty of the fruit neither, but the nature of it. There is a fruit that is fair to the eye, and of a pleasant smell, but of a poysonous nature. *Israel was a vine of goodly branches, and fruit enough, but it was wild.*

and sower fruit. Sin as the principle is, such is the action; bad principles will never produce good works. But when we speak of new principles, you must know, that we intend not new natural faculties; but the faculties spiritualiz'd and morally dispos'd unto new operations. I might instance in several things, as a saving illumination, a filial fear; a pure conscience; mortification, self-denial, &c. I shall mention onely these two, under which the Apostle doth virtually comprehend all the rest, 1 Tim. 1. 14. and 2 Tim. 1. 13. faith and love.

- I. 1. *Faith.* What St. James says of faith, *Jam. 2. 20. that faith without works is dead;* the same may we say of works, that works without faith are dead too. *Without faith it is impossible to please God, Heb. 11. 6.* thousands of rams, or ten thousand of rivers of oil; though thou speak with the tongue of men and angels, art accomplisht with gifts ordinary and extraordinary, though thou give all thy goods to feed the poor, and thy body to be burned, all this will not do; without faith it is impossible. Faith is the receiving of Christ. *Joh. 1. 12.* But we must receive him, before we can improve him. *As the branch cannot bear fruit of it self, except it abide in the vine, no more can ye, except ye abide in me, Joh. 15. 4.* Faith is that great vessel, which conveighs all the influences of life or counsel from Christ  
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the head; so that where there is no faith there can be no gospel-obedience. I might tell you here how faith doth excite and exercise every grace in the soul particularly; but that we are like to trespass the bounds of our intended brevity.

2. *Love.* Faith enlightens, convinces and directs, and love quickens the soul and sweetens the work. Faith puts into the way and love drives on in it. Faith plants, and love waters, *faith worketh by love, Gal. 5. 6.* love is the hand of faith, without which it can do nothing. *If ye love me keep my commandments, Joh. 14. 15.* Love is all in the soul; what is zeal and patience, godly sorrow and joy, humility, self-denial, heavenly-mindedness, obedience and perseverance, but love in its several offices and operations? this is the root of all, and the main-spring that moves every wheel in its place and order. Every grace thrives where love thrives; but where this dies all dies. Christian, believe it thou wert better loose thy life, than loose thy love, better not live at all, than not live to God. Nay, love doth not onely put life, but worth and value into all thy duties. This is the *diamond* in the ring, the gold in the purse, loose this, and you were even as good loose all. Whatever your labours or duties be, if they be not the labours and fruit of love, they will never profit you, *1 Cor. 13. beg.* God accepts of nothing but at



the hand of love. *My son, give me thy heart,* this I will have, or nothing. Here I might enumerate the special properties of love, love unites, and makes the soul one with God; love is bountiful; counts all too little for him; love is tender, cannot bear his dishonor, nor his displeasure; love is jealous, yet not of him, but for him. But I shall not insist here.

2. *2. New objects.* Whereas the world and the flesh, like Bell and the Dragon, were wont to devour all the sacrifices of thy obedience; now all must be offered unto God in and through Christ. *O Lord our God, other Lords besides thee have had dominion over us, but by thee onely will we make mention of thy name,* Isa. 26.

*Hab. 1. 16.* 13. *I have sacrificed to my own net, and burnt incense to my drag.* The world and my lusts have had my time, my strength, my heart, my all; these have been my Lords, at whose beck I have been as their miserably devoted slave, I have thought all too little I could do for them, and have been ready to bethink every thing as lost, wherein these have not been served. My very praying and hearing and reading time have seem'd too much, and the Lords-days too soon and too long; nay, my necessary eating and sleeping and visiting times have been counted a waste; and have been ready to censure and condemn others that have not been as mad as I. But now, Lord! I am ashamed, I cannot but blush to think on the course

course that I have taken. No more my will now, but thy will be done; by thee, through thy grace assisting me, I will make mention onely of thy name, I will own no Lord over me; but thee, or for thy sake. Command what thou wilt, here I am, I will obey. Let the duty, or the cross be what it will, I will take it up, what ever the world or the flesh say to the contrary. Away from me for ever, ye imperious tyrants, ye bewitching *Syrens*, ye flattering harlots. You whom I could once deify, I now defy: cease your suits, and your quarrels, go, matter your charms to them that will be enchanted by you. As for me, I am resolv'd what to do. Reckon me no more among your vassals but from hence forth count me for your enemy. The God of *Jacob* shall be my God, and his law my rule. I am no more yours, nor yet my own, but his. He shall be my fear and my dread as long as I live.

3. *New Subjects*, or matter. The new principle is in order to new practice: not only above, but contrary to the old conversation. Whereas the man was wont to please himself, now he must deny himself. Whereas he was wont to spend his idle hours in Bowling-greens or Ball-courts, or on Ale-benches, or some other way vainly or wickedly, now he finds other employments to bestow his time on. He that never knew what it was to pray,

or instruct his family, or examine his own heart, or quicken and encourage others in their duty, or relieve the oppressed, &c. now is never better pleased, than when most solemnly engag'd in these duties.

And thus far for the terms, on which this *Physician* undertakes this *Cure*.

2. We are next to shew you the *way* in which he will do it, and that in these three particulars.

1. 8. *He will do it so, as that his Justice shall be fully satisfied.* God will not violate one attribute to exalt another. *He will by no means clear the guilty*, *Exod. 34. 7.* that is, by no means prejudicial to his Justice. He must be as just as merciful. Man hath sinned, and man must die; the decree is past, and must not be reversed, more unchangeable than the law of the *Medes and Persians*: 'tis the word of an immutable God, and therefore must stand. Now herein appears the glory of divine wisdom and goodness, that he hath opened a way wherein lost man may be recovered, and yet justice satisfied, even in that *mystery of godliness, which is God manifested in the flesh*, *1 Tim. 3. 16.* 'Tis true, justice requires personal and perfect obedience; therefore Christ as surety, hath obeyed: but the law was broken, and the offender condemned; therefore Christ hath died, and so hath fully answered the justice of the Law, both in the precept and penalty of

of it. But it was *man* that sinned, therefore, says the Law, *man* shall die. Now to answer this, Christ became *man*, took on him the humane nature, was made flesh of our flesh, and bone of our bone, whereby he became a complete Mediator and propitiation for sin, between God and man: yea, and the justice of God, not only legally satisfied, but abundantly more glorified this way, than it could have been, had all the forlorn posterity of fallen *Adam* suffered the penalty in their own persons. For by how much the more glorious Christ is than all his creatures, and by how much the more nearly related unto the Father by so much the more glorious is that justice, which inflicted on him the full measure of that wrath which was due to sinners. Besides, the case being so ordered, that justice and mercy may now both conspire together, the one attribute contributes to the glory of the other. Pure justice had not been of that sweet and amiable beauty, had it not gone in hand with mercy.

2. *He will do it in such a way, as that his mercy shall be exalted.* This is the great design of his Gospel, to advance the honour of free grace. Therefore he sent his Angels to proclaim, *Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good will towards men*, Luke 2. 14. He hath for ever excluded all ways and occasions of boasting; the work is altogether of grace.

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It had indeed been an act of undeserved favour and condescension, for God to have vouchsafed to treat with fallen man by a mediator, but freely to provide this mediator, and then to accept of satisfaction from him, on such easie and honorable terms, this is far more: Therefore is Christ called the *free gift of God*, Rom. 5. 15. Nay, *herein is love*, says St. John, herein are the riches of mercy discovered, *not that we loved him, but that he loved us*, even while we hated him, *and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins*, 1 John 4. 10.

3. 3. *He will do it so as that the eternal estate of the soul shall be infallibly secured. Whom he did foreknow, he also did predestinate, and whom he did predestinate, them he also called; and whom he called, them he also justified; and whom he justified, them he also glorified*, Rom. 8. 39, 40. Not one link of this golden chain shall ever be broken. *He hath made an everlasting covenant, ordered in all things, and sure*, 2 Sam. 23. 5. Secured on a better foundation, because in a better hand than the first covenant. The first Adam was but a mutable man, the second an unchangeable God; therefore, *who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect; it is God that justifieth*: even he whose gifts and calling are without repentance. *Who is he that condemneth, it is Christ that died*, Rom. 8. 33, 34. Let the world censure, let the De-



vil accuse, let the law condemn, here stands our imprennable rock, *It is God that justifieth, yea, it is Christ that died*; whose blood is effectual for the healing of his peoples back-slidings, as to the guilt of them, that they shall never condemn them; as to the bewitching spirit of them, that they shall not mortally seduce them. *Behold, I will hedge up thy way with thorns, and make a wall that she shall not find her paths*, Hos. 2. 6. and as to the temporal effects of them too, further than is for their correction and amendment. *I will heal their back-slidings, I will love them truly, for mine anger is turned away from him*, Hosea 14. 4.

3. The third question is, by what means? God doth effect this *cure*?

Some means are to be used on God's part, and some on man's. Again, those on God's part are either outward and common, or inward and special. The outward means are

1. *His word and ordinances. Faith cometh 1. by hearing, and hearing by the word of God*, Rom. 10. 17. This is the ordinary means both to beget faith, where it is not, to confirm it where it is weak, and to recover it where it is decayed. *It pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe*, 1 Cor. 1. 21. But here observe, it must be *His Ordinances*, that is, of his appointment and institution. *How shall they preach, except they be sent?*

*sent?* Where there is no Scripture-commission, there is no Scripture-promise. The harlots breasts may be full and fair, but they are bastards, not sons, that are wont to be suckled at them. 'Tis the sincere milk of the true mother the Church, that Christ's babes do grow by.

2. *His providences.* Christ the great Shepherd hath several ways to gather in his wandering sheep to him: some by his *voice*, the gracious call of his word; its authority commands, or its threatnings terrifie, or its promises allure them. Others are more dull, untractable or stubborn, for these he is faine to stretch forth his *crook*, or his *rod*, and to fetch them in by some fatherly correction. Words will prevail with some, when as others must have blows. Again, sometimes the whole flock is so scattered in their wandrings, and grown regardless of his voice, that he is forc'd to send out his *dog* after them to hunt and persecute them. *In their affliction they will seek me early*, Hos. 5. 15. The word instructs the ear, and the rod applies it to the fence. And by the way, we might note, for the fuller vindication of free grace, that God is not wont to make use of these severer courses, till he hath found milder ways to be ineffectual. *He doth not afflict willingly, nor grieve the children of men*, Lam. 3. 33. *Thy ways and thy doings have procured these things unto thee*, Jer. 4. 18. Not only

only deserved them. (for I deal not with thee after thy deservings) but procured them by having brought thee to that pass, that there is no other course to be taken with thee to heal thee, and prevent thy utter ruine.

2. The *inward means* by which he worketh this change, are,

1. *His imputed righteousness for the removal of the guilt of sin.* This mantle he cloaths them with, and in it presents them as righteous and without spot. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in him, 2 Cor. 5. 21. This is one part of mans disease, that he is not only void of righteousness, but sick of a fond conceit, that he hath something of himself, that may at least contribute to his own justification. Wherefore till God hath effectually beaten him out of this refuge of lyes, and convinc'd him of his own poverty and wretchedness, he is morally incapable of Christ's righteousness, but first he must be made sensible of his own nakedness, and then he cloaths him. And this righteousness, being by faith received, which is the condition of that covenant, by which it is ensured, is as truly and fully made over to the soul, as if it were naturally inherent in him: and justice is as amply satisfied in the surety, as if the principal debtor himself had done it.

2. *His Spirit,* both to begin and perfect the

the work of sanctification, to destroy, and by degrees to pluck up the very root of apostacy. *The first man Adam was made a living soul, the last Adam was made a quickning spirit, 1 Cor. 15. 45. And if ye through the spirit do mortifie the deeds of the body, ye shall live, Rom. 8. 13. God will have all his children to be like him; he will not bestow his kingdom on any, but those on whom he hath bestowed his image. As obedient children, not fashioning your selves according to the former lusts in your ignorance, but as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation, 1 Pet. 1. 14, 15. Sanctification is a work that moveth on by degrees, and is not fully perfected in this life, nor shall be, till we arrive to that estate of the spirits of just men made perfect. But it must, in order of nature, be in truth begun in the first degree of it, before a person can be actually justified. For faith, which is the condition of justification, purifyeth the heart, Act. 15. 9. and the condition of the promise must proceed the right to the privilege of it, or the blessing promised. Therefore says the Apostle, whom he called them he also justified. But effectual calling is that which first sows the soul with the seeds of sanctification. Nor is there any other fundamental evidence of our justification in the court of conscience, but this; for this undenyall maxime is, at it were, engraven there; I cannot*

*cannot be justified while I willfully continue in my sins. I must come to Christ before I can have any right to him, and I must have a new heart before I can say I am come to him. But here take notice, we do not speak now of the order of time, but the order of nature.*

2. We come now to shew you what those *means* are that must be used on *mans* part, in order to the perfecting of this cure. And hereon indeed depends all our hope and possibility of success: If we be not heard in this, all that hath been hitherto said signifies nothing. Friend, hast thou read thus far? and hast thou duly considered what thou hast read? if so, then let me ask thee again: Hast thou found nothing, that conscience may tell thee doth concern thine interest? hast thou no secret intimations that thou art one of those my text is speaking to and calling on? if not, turn thee behind me, I have nothing at present to say to such a one. But if thou findest that thou hast reason to lay thy hand on thy mouth and to smite on thy thigh, under the sence of thy guilt, then tarry thou here, while I turn aside and bend my knee to the Almighty God, who alone is able to circumcise the ear and the heart and to give success to our endeavours.

**O** *Thou eternal Father of lights! who enlightenest every one that cometh into the world, whose words are as nails and as goods! on these nails, Lord! thy unworthiest servant*



hath hitherto been driving. O thou the absolute Prince and Master of the assembly! lift up thy hammer and fasten them in their sure places. Cause them to take strong hold on the hearts of a backsliding people, clinch and rivet them, so as that neither the malice nor subtilty of satan may ever be able to draw them again. Lord set thy bellows to the work and blow up the coals under the wood, which I have laboured to lay in order. Sharpen these spurs that they may pierce. Strengthen the cords that they may draw. Way-lay thy Sauls before they arrive the Damascus of another world. Send thine angel to treat these Baalaams in the way. Convince them that they must return, if ever they mean to be happy. Shew them that death and hell is before them. Alas! though I put thy lamp into their hands, and beg them on my knees to direct their steps by the light of it, though I should line out thy way to them, and set the sharpest thorns of scripture-threatnings at the head of every by-path, and write death upon it, what will it signify! whither will they wander with thy light in their hands? How many thousand ways have poor sinners to deceive and undo themselves! Yet they will seek thee, as though they delighted to know thy ways, they will enquire and ask for the good old paths, but will not be persuaded to walk in them, further than their own interests lead them. Lord! what wilt thou have thy servant to do for these poor souls? My bowels! my bowels! I am pained at my very heart for  
 them

them, oh that I knew wherewith to persuade them! that I were able to come within them! that I knew how to treat with a stubborn and gainsaying generation. How shall I do to be faithful to them, and yet not to drive them the further from thee? If I tell them what they like not, they will either condemn me for a liar, or a busy-body, or else will give it the hearing, but live as they list. Should I resolve to please them, I were better say nothing. But who can see his brothers house tumbling about his ears, and not cry out to give him warning? O thou in whose hands are the hearts of the children of men! Heal the backslidings of thy people. Let not thy servant allways beat the air, nor cast pearl before swine, break up their fallow-ground, tear up the thorns, rend the rocks, bring thy field in temper, and then bleß the seed, make truths clear, make duties easy, make thy people willing both to learn and to obey. Now that thou hast in any measure convicted them of their evil case and so graciously proclaim'd thy readiness to heal them, let not the work fail through the willfull incapacity of the patient. Perswade them that their obedience is their honor and their duty their onely safety. Will the Lord now say amen! and bid his poor servant go on and prosper. Oh how gladly would I spend and be spent in the service I am, through thy grace, devoted to, that thy Israel may be gathered, thy gospel-kingdom advanced, and thy Christ glorified in his Saints.

And now sinner! let me return to thee.

Art thou one that enquirest what thou shalt do to be saved? wouldst thou know what the Lord doth require of thee? and if I should tell thee, wilt thou believe? what do directions from thy physician signify, unless thou resolve to follow them? nay canst thou be ignorant of these things? hast thou never been told what thou ought'st to do, that thou mayst walk to wellpleasing before God, and inherit eternal life? where else hast thou liv'd? among what forlorn souls hast thou led thy life? nay, hast thou not had *line upon line and precept upon precept*? have not all the faithful messengers of Christ that ever thou mett'st with, made this their business, to instruct thee in, and to exhort thee to this very thing? couldst thou but read the notes thy own conscience hath written, thou might'st thence inform thy self in this matter. But now, what if the Lord, by the unworthiest of his servants, once more reach forth his hand to lead thee? wilt thou follow him? if he take thee by the arms and teach thee to go, wilt thou learn? oh how am I afraid lest I should loose my labour; and yet were that all, the loss were not to be mentioned; but I know who will be the greatest losers at last. Oh sinner! bethink thy self, how many faithful directions, plain instructions and loving intreaties are there already on record against thee? and shall these now be added as so many further aggravations of thy contempt?

contempt? but I hope better things of some, and things that do accompany salvation. If then thou wilt be healed, if thou wilt be happy, set thine heart to these words of advice, and the Lord give thee understanding in all things.

*1. Seriously set thy self to study and consider Dir. 1. this sin of backsliding.* Recollect what thou hast heard or read of the aggravations of it both here and elsewhere. Let thy thoughts dwell and comment on it.

*1. Study it in the offence of it:* and that both *1.* to God and man. Hereby is God most highly dishonored and justly provoked; his gospel reproached, his authority slighted; his patience abused; his covenant trampled on; his blessed son crucified afresh; his holy spirit grieved, and all the gracious ends of his gospel frustrated. Besides others are offended; the righteous scandalized; the weak stumbled and ensnared; the strong grieved and ashamed; and both the more hated, calumniated and persecuted by the world. The wicked encouraged and hardened; conscience wounded both in the life and peace of it; the soul murdered, at least captivated; every grace weakened, and none but the devil and his instruments rejoiced. Now take these things and spread them before thee. See how thy guilty heart can in earnest look on them. Reason thus with thy own soul, as *Joseph* once

with his mistress. *How can I do this great evil and sin against God?* Shall I willfully plunge myself in all this guilt, and desperately split all my hopes on the rocks, which I am so fairly and timely caution'd of? what though thou take thy self to be a child of God, and that thy drawing back is not unto perdition, but as the failings of *David, Peter, &c.* I might ask thee, how few wilt thou find in the world that do not take themselves to be the children of God as well as thou? and yet it is certain that most of these are mistaken. But suppose it be so, will this excuse thee? or rather in some respects aggravate thy sin? if thou be such a one as thou sayest, remember

- I. 1. Thou sinnest against greater *means* than others. If not against greater common means than some others, yet against greater special means. Therefore it shall be more tolerable for *Sodom* in the day of judgment than for *Capernaum*.

*Math. 11.  
24.*

2. Against greater *knowledge*. If thy supposition concerning thy self be true, thou hast received a far clearer and greater light than any natural man ever attained unto, who hath a veil always upon his heart, that he cannot perceive spiritual things in a spiritual manner: but if *thou* hast had this veil removed, thy sin must needs be now by so much the greater.

*James 4. 17.* To him that knoweth to do well and doth it not, to him it is sin, and that in one of the highest aggravations.

3. Against



3. Against greater *mercies*. For whom else in all the world hath God done, as he hath done for his Saints? What Arithmetick can reach the thousandth part of what he hath bestowed on them, or prepared for them? Therefore *David* distinguishes, *Remember me, O Lord, with the favour thou bearest unto thy people*. So then, the more special grace thou hast received, the greater and more inexcusable is thy sin.

*Psal. 105. 4.*

4. Against greater *expectations*; and that both from God and men. There is more self-denial, steadfastness, and resolution expected from a professor, than from another. *Dead flies cause the ointment of the Apothecary to send forth a stinking savour; so doth a little folly him that is in reputation for wisdom and honour,*

*Eccles. 10. 1.* Even one dead fly, so the noun plural with the verb singular should be translated, and so it is used in the *apodosis* of the later clause. *A little folly makes him to stink that is in reputation for wisdom and honour.*

*Muscarum mortuorum vel uno, Syn. Critic. Cum discrepant numero, distribuitur nem notant. Byth.*

Small spots make great shews in perfect black or white; therefore God shews greater detestation of their sins, than of the sins of others; and when he comes to visit a people for sin, these are the first he uses to take in hand, *Begin at my sanctuary, Ezek. 9. 6.*

5. Against greater *promises* and *engagements*. If thou art the Lords, as thou sayest, thou art his by a special covenant; thou hast

solemnly lifted up thy hand, and sworn fidelity to him, so as the unregenerate never did; But of this before.

6. 6. Lastly, to say no more; thy sins do more mischief than the sins of others. How are the wicked hardened by them! they are even a comfort to them; for by this means they go on the more securely and incorrigibly, it is said of the sins of *Jerusalem*, Ezek. 16. 54. *that they were a comfort to Sodom and Samaria*. They were glad to see that those that were called Saints, were as bad as they; this they take to be a comfortable evidence of the goodness of their own estates. And is not this the sad use that wicked men are wont to make of such examples? How are the weak ensnared? *If any man see thee, which hast knowledge, sit at meat in the idols temple, shall not the conscience of him that is weak be emboldned to eat those things which are offered to idols?* 1 Cor. 8. 10. Thy walking on the brink may occasion thy brother's falling into the pit. Thy nibbling at the bait tempts another to swallow it. How is God dishonoured? so that he may say to thee, as *Jacob* once to *Simeon* and *Levi*, Gen. 34. 30. *Ye have troubled me to make me to stink among the inhabitants of the land*. Many other ways could I tell thee, thy sins are aggravated by thy profession. But I hope I have said enough already to convince thee, if thou canst but perswade thy self to a sober consideration of it,

2. Study it in the *effects* of it. This thou hast also had before. To back-slide from God is to back-slide to the Devil; both to his work, and to his ways. Satan and the Backslider are one, as Christ and his members are one. They have one common design, he is a man after the Devils own heart, acted by the same spirit, and driving on towards the same fatal end. Now sinner! wilt thou not commune with thy own soul about these things? Shall I joyn my self to the Devil, and marry my immortal soul, the betrothed spouse of Christ, to that foul fiend? Shall I take the members of Christ, and make them the members not of an *harlot* only, but of that hellhound? Shall I drudge for him here, and dwell with him to all eternity? Will the unquenchable flames of hell be as sweet to me, as the flames of lust are now? Will the horrible smother of fire and brimstone be as pleasant as my powders and perfumes now? Will the lamentable shrieks of damned wretches be as melodious as the viol or organ? Will the company of infernal furies be as good as those I am now making my self so merry with? Were I not best be serious then, and in earnest consider what I am doing, and whither my course is leading me, and on what grounds I build my hopes of a better life?

3. Study it in the *sliness* and *deceitfulness* of it. This sin is always in a visible or invisible

manner at work, to undermine or circumvent thee. While thou art sleeping or securely sporting thy self, this is like *Faux* and his confederates, digging in the *mine*, and preparing a fatal blow against thy soul. Every day, and every providence, nay, every duty, and every ordinance doth insensibly steal upon thee a hardness of heart, a growing *callum* and searedness of conscience. Every foot from God is not only so much lost of thy way, and of thy time, but so much of thy strength, and of thy heart too: for the further thou goest, the further thou mayest, the more secure still. O sinner! shall I yet persuade thee to make a stand here? and alarm thy soul with this serious *memento*? why! within a few days more, where am I like to be? my feet are set in slippery places, I am loosing ground; my misery is coming upon me like an armed man; death and judgment, like *Abimaaz* and *Cush*; are coming post towards me with the heavy tidings of the eternal loss and perdition of my soul, and here I have sit for thus long together as one unconcern'd in these things. I have been call'd upon, but would not hear, and now I am almost out of hearing. O my soul! what have we done? while I have been hearing, I have been hardning; while I have been confessing of sin, I have been confederate with it; and when most religious, then doing my self the greatest mischief. Is it not yet time  
for

for us to be serious, while yet there is a little hope before us, though the gate be straight, yet there is a possibility of entring, if we will but strive; but when it is once shut, it will be forever too late. Sirs! 'tis for want of this due consideration and effectual application of things that so many thousands perish and will perish. This is the reason that we preach so much in vain, and men hear in vain, that we study and watch and pray and write and spend our selves, and at last throw all away, as those that sow on a bare rock, or in the midst of the sea; nor can we expect it should be otherwise, till men will be perswaded to a more deep and penetrating consideration of what we offer them.

2. *Sit down and count the cost.* Our Saviour *Dir. 2.* himself commends to us this advise, *Luke 14. 28.* *For which of you intending to build a tower sitteth not down first and counteth the cost, whether he have sufficient to finish it?* A profession taken up without due deliberation is never wont to have its *ἔργον τέλειον* finished work, its consummation and top-stone; but either it must in time be righted, or it will to all eternity be ruined. 'Tis for want of this that there are so many, who set their hands to the plough and low back: they never rightly counted the cost. Wherefore that this crack in thy foundation may not run any further, be perswaded, yet at length, to be serious while there is hope, and consider  
What



What it must cost thee.

What it may cost thee.

Christ himself hath summed up all to thy hands in that one place, *Matth. 16. 24. If any man will come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his Cross, and follow me.* Here is

I.

*Tit. 2. 12.*

1. *What it must cost thee*, and that is *self-denial*. If thou wilt be a disciple of Christ, thou must resolve to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, which is thy *sinful self*. All thy weapons of hostility must be laid down; thy proud heart must no more exalt itself. Every lust must lay down its neck, and suffer a fall and fatal examination. Thou must bid thy old affections, thy old courses, communication, companions, &c. adieu forever, and must take up a holy, righteous, and circumspect life. Thou must steer a new course,

*Ephes. 4. 28.*

*Let him that stole steal no more.* Hast thou been a drunkard, thou must be drunk no more. Hast thou been a swearer, an adulterer, a prophaner of the Sabbaths, a back-biter, proud, envious, covetous, unjust, self-will'd, living in the neglect or carnal performance of religious duties? whatever the lust of thy heart be, or that evil way wherein thou hast lived, thou must resolve to deny all this, whatever it be that stands in the way. Again, thou must deny thy righteousness and performances in point of justification, thy *religious*

*self*; and look on all that, wherein thou wert wont to trust or to boast, but as filthy and unprofitable rags. Thou must have higher thoughts of others than of thy *self*, and be heartily content that others should esteem thee too. Thou must deny thy ease, thy liberty, thy friends, thy estate, thy life, which is thy *natural self*, at least in affection and resolution, and in reality when called to it. Thy heart must be weaned from every thing under the Sun, and Christ must have the preeminence. In this sence if thou wilt have Christ, it must cost thee all that thou hast, *Matth. 13. 46.* Thou must deny thy *self*, and what hast thou more? But to this purpose before. Oh! how few are there that have duly counted this cost? They take up this profession rather for speculation, than for practice. Repentance, self-denial, and a new life, they will readily own, and speak highly of, and yet practically ignorant what it is, and heart-enemies to it. Sirs! till this first lesson be better studied, and learn'd, you are utterly incapable of any creditable or profitable proceeding in Christ's School.

2. *What it may cost thee.* Thou hast heard it must cost thee thy sins; and sure thou needest not bethink it that it must cost thee the parting with thy disease to recover health, and with nasty rags to receive costly robes. But it may cost thee somewhat more; thy ease, thy credit,

2.

credit among some sorts of men, thy worldly friends, thy liberty, thy peace, thy estate, all worldly comforts, yea and thy life too. It may be thou hast often heard of this; but didst thou ever seriously count on this cost? The coward may go on jocundly and confidently till he come in sight of the enemy; but when he sees the swords and spears begin to glister, the shaking of the pikes, and roaring of the guns, he begins to shrink from his colours, and to look about which way to flee. This is the great prejudice that the spiritual sluggard hath against the ways of God. *There is a lyon in the way*; there is poverty, and disgrace, and persecution, bryars and thorns, fire and faggot in the ways of strict godliness. *The land indeed is good*, said the spies, *but there are the children of Anak there, and cities that are walled, and very great, a land that eateth up the inhabitants thereof.* There are many that are convinc'd in conscience that the way of God, is in it self, a good way. A brave thing to be a Christian. They see there is a beauty in real godliness. The clusters of *Eschol* are fair and desirable, were it not for this, and that, and the other inconvenience that lies in the way. Could they but indent with God to their minds, they would adventure. Could they be sure they should meet with no weary steps, nor foul weather, nor any thing else to molest or affrighten them, nor prejudice any worldly

*Numb. 13.  
28, &c.*

worldly concern by it, they could be content to bear others company. But is this the spirit and resolution that becomes a Christian? what says *Hester*, *If I perish, I perish*. If I loose the world and win heaven? If I loose the world and win Christ, I will never repent it. *Ignis, crux, ferarum concursus --- totius corporis contritiones & Diaboli tormenta in me veniant tantummodo ut Jesum nanciscar*, said *Ignatius*. *Epist. ad Rom.*  
*Come fire, gallows, wild-beasts, breaking of bones, tearing of members, contrition of the whole body, and torments of the Devil too, so that I may win Christ.* Let us play the men for our people, says *Joab*; and shall we play the cowards and the fools for our souls? Had the Apostles and primitive Saints been of this temper, where had we now been? and where had been the gospel which we yet enjoy? *2 Sam. 10. 12.*  
 When *Ignatius* was thrown to the wild beasts, and began to be torn by them; *Now* (says he) *ἔτι νῦν ἀρχομαι*  
*I begin to be a Christian.* Then indeed he was *ἔτι νῦν ἀρχομαι*  
 on the hardest work, and gave the clearest *ἔτι νῦν ἀρχομαι*  
 proof of his Christianity. *Be of good comfort* (said *Latimer* to *Ridley*) when at the stake together, *and play the man, we shall this day light such a candle, by God's grace, in England, as I trust, shall never be put out.* Were there indeed more of his spirit, there might be the better grounds for his hopes still. Remember, the Coward is but the next door to the Traytor. The fearful and unbelieving lead the

the forlorn hope, with the abominable murderers, whoremongers, forcerers, idolaters, and lyars to that lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, *Rev.* 21. 8.

3. *Study thy own heart better.* 'Tis a piece of the greatest wisdom, and of the hardest study in the world, for a man to know himself. The very heathen accounted this as a divine oracle, a heavenly monition from the gods. *E cælo descendit γνῶσι σεαυτὸν.* But of all self-knowledge, the knowledge of the heart is of greatest difficulty and highest consequence. Study thy own heart then

*Juven. Sat.*  
11.

1. *In its readiness to entertain sin.* Solomon's observation is too true, *Eccles.* 8. 11. *The heart of the sons of men is fully set in them to do evil.* It is filled with a desire of doing evil; sin is its very nature, both by original and custom. 'Tis not more natural for fire to burn, or for sparks to flie upward, or water to run downward, than for the heart to sin. We may say of it here, as Christ once said of the Devil; when he speaketh a lye, he speaketh *de suo*, of his own; so when the heart is carried out after sin, and gives entertainment to it, it acts of its own. This is that it can do, and (of it self, with respect to its depraved principles) all it can do. It is like a box of tinder, or a fire-work, that greedily catches at the least spark that falls upon it. It even thirsts and pants after sin, nothing pleases it, as that which

*John 8 44.*



which poisons and perverts it. Oh! how easily is it ensnared, and how hardly reclaimed. It even tempts the tempter, as if that vigilant unwearied fiend were too idle. It calls upon the Devil, as it were, for new temptations, as the drunkard on his hostess for his pots, who is wont to be ready enough of her self to ply him with her intoxicating liquors, though to the ruine both of his body and soul: or as the impudent harlot that inticeth the young man, who of himself is *in vitium præcep*s forward enough. It drinketh iniquity like water, and is even glad of all occasions that tend to the strengthening of its own bonds. This is the natural temper of thy heart, and that spirit which thou art of. And while it is thus with thee, what security can there be against thy falling away? Sinner, canst thou in no measure experience what I say to be true by thy self! Doeſt thou not find what a dead lump thy heart is in every spiritual duty? how hard a matter it is to make it a little serious, even then when its highest concernments are in hand? and how hard it is to keep it serious? how apt it is to start aside? Every glance of the eye, every roving thought, every vain trifle that is offered, is ready to run away with it, and to distract it in thy most solemn duty. Now consider this, if thou wouldst be found stedfast with God, and not like a broken and deceitful bow, or like a dry leaf rolled to and fro,

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fro, and transported with every wind of temptation, thou must get thy heart delivered from this principle and root of apostacy.

2.

2. *In its deceitfulness to cover and hide sin.*

Jer. 17. 9.

The heart is not only *desperately wicked*, and fully set to do evil, but *deceitful above all things*.

Barth.

Oh! what shifts and evasions, what excuses and extenuations will it find to plead for sin, and to cast a mantle over its shame. *Non feci, si feci, non male feci, si male feci, non multum male, &c.* If it cannot deny the matter of fact, it will seek to justify it; if it cannot justify it, it will extenuate it. Herein lies the mystery of its wickedness, which is so hard a matter to discover. A thousand ways the Devil hath to hide sin from thy own eyes, as well as from the eyes of others, to make thee believe that black is white, and darkness light, and bitter sweet, and that evil is good. And this he easily perswades thee to, while this is a principle rooted in thy lapsed nature, to dread the shame of sin, more than the real guilt of it. and the imputation, more than the pollution. If conscience begin to accuse and condemn, what's the next course? either thou lookest on it as a fit of melancholy, and that which must not be yielded to; or else it is approved of as a good motion, and so dismissed with a dry sigh, and taken as an undoubted evidence of a sound repentance, and a good heart, and so tends to the searing of the con-

conscience. But if it will not be answered so, but the sin must be confess'd, Satan will then tell thee, that those are the common infirmities of the people of God, and who is there that liveth and sinneth not? thou doest repent of it, and needest not question thy forgiveness. Besides, to prove thy case to be good, thou art, it may be, no swearer, no drunkard, no whoremonger, no extortioner, no dissembler; thou lovest to serve God, art good to the poor, and walkest more unblameably than many others do. So that if thou hearest thy sins reproved by the word, either thou hearest for others, or one way or other wardest the blow of it. Or it may be, accusest the servant of God of railing, or ill-will, or passion and hot-spiritedness. If any of thy brethren be so faithful as to give thee a seasonable admonition, either thou beginst to retaliate and fling dirt on thy reprovor, or somebody else; and pleadest that others, that make a greater shew, are as guilty one way or other as thou art: or pleadest such and such good ends, that may seem to bespeak an honest intention, though these ends were never thought of, till thou hast need of them to justify thy excuse. Or else it was thy ignorance, thou thoughtest no harm. Or others did thus and thus provoke thee, and so the sin is theirs, &c. What men are ashamed to own, they will hasten to shuffle aside out of sight, and

clap a veil over it. An evil heart may be ashamed of sin, as the thief sometimes is when he is taken, which is indeed not to be ashamed of the sin; but ashamed that others should know it. When once a sin is openly convicted, it begins to be grievous and loathsome to the eye, though not always to the heart: so that the sinner is fain to deal with it as *Abraham* dealt with *Sarah* when she was dead; though his affections did not die, yet the pleasure of his eyes was gone, and therefore buries her out of his sight, *Gen. 23. 4.* Thus 'tis with a deceitful heart; while sin is alive with it in the commissions and pleasures of it, 'tis its delight, and must not be denied; but when once it is dead, that is, as to the pleasure and peace, that once the heart enjoyed with it, though not as to the being nor power of it, then it begins to stink and is offensive, on the account of the shame and danger of it; therefore away with it, it must be buried out of its sight: but where? surely not without the camp, but for some surviving affection sake, it must have a grave in the temple of the heart, and be covered up there in the dust and ashes of a mock-repentance, while conscience is ringing a doleful knell over it. And ordinarily, when one sin is thus buried (in pageantry rather than reality) either the same lust is revived in another habit, or else the heart is soon married to another. Ah! Sir!

how

how many such sepulchers are there to be found in the *Golgotha* of an hypocritical heart, which shall one day be opened, as so many witnesses against impenitent mockers of God? Now that which I would press you to here in order to the establishing you against this back-sliding spirit, is to study your own hearts, that you never miscarry through any of these hidden mysteries of iniquity. How often have I heard thy vain boasts that thou canst not dissemble nor play the hypocrite, thou art not proud, thou art not covetous, thou art not envious, thou hatest such and such sins with a perfect hatred, &c. Take heed there be not *anguis sub herba*, a root of bitterness undiscerned and unmortified at the bottom of all this. Ah! what searching of heart (methinks) should there be here? What fears and jealousies shouldest thou be filled with? yet not to distract nor discourage, but to awaken and quicken thee. Remember thou hast to do with the veriest Traitor, the fairest tongu'd harlot that is in the world: how canst thou be too wary? Wert thou assur'd that thou hadst in thy garden several weeds that are poisonous and mortal, and these growing among the herbs which thou daily gatherest for thy pot, and so well like them, that it were a very hard matter to discern them; wouldest thou not shew the care thou hast of thy life, by examining every

Y 3 thing



thing that grows in thy garden, lest thou should mistake, and thy mistake be thy bane? would'st thou not beg the advice of those that are best skill'd in these things, seeing thy life and family lies at stake? This garden is thy heart, and those poisonous weeds are the lusts that grow there; which are in many cases so well like grace, that without the light of the word, and wisdom of the spirit, they cannot be distinguished. What wilt thou do then? Is not thy soul as well worth thy care as thy body? and thy heart as thy garden? Let both thy principles and thy actions pass under an impartial and particular examination. This is that I call by the name of humility; but is it not possible that I may be mistaken? This I take to be self-denial, or charity, or love to God, or zeal, or mortification to the world, &c. But dare I adventure my soul on it, that they are really and truly what they seem to be? Doth not this or that look like pride? Do I not in such and such cases or actions seem to walk too near the borders of covetousness, or envy, or hypocrisy, &c. What censures should I have been ready to pass on such things, if I had seen them in others, especially such as I have no great affection for? Might I not better have walked at a greater distance from the snare? Is there as much of the contrary grace here, as there should be? If I will not hear that this or that should be called pride, am I sure

sure there is as much humility in it, as there should be? if I will not have it call'd envy, or uncharitableness, yet is there as much love and tenderness of affection in it, as there should be? sinner! why shouldst thou go about to plead for that, which will shortly plead against thee? or to hide that, which must be brought forth before men and angels at last? well! unless thou willfully designest thy own destruction, set thy self to study thy own heart better; if there be a worm undiscerned or unremoved at thy root; all thy labour or art will not keep thee from withering, if thou wouldst be secur'd from the foulest apostacy, learn to know thy self. And do not think that this lesson is easily learnt, 'tis not a few slight glances that will do it, thy heart is a book, that thou must study all the days of thy life, yea the longer thou perusest it, the more need thou wilt see to keep thy self exercis'd in it.

4. *Study the attributes and promises of God Dir. 4. more thorowly and practically.* Consider thus with thy self he is a good God, and how can I forsake him? when the blessed *Polycarpus* was urged by the *Proconsul* to deny Christ and to save his life. *I have served him these 86 years,* (says he) *and he hath not once hurt me; and shall I now deny him?* where can I go to find a better master? I want for nothing that is good, as far as I am truly content with what I have, and he hath engaged that I never shall

if I will but wait on him; though my work be sometimes hard, yet he helps and pitties me; though I come in every thing short of my duty, yet he accepts me; though I offend him daily, yet he forgives me; though the world frown and reproach and persecute me, yet he protects me; though Satan accuse me, yet he is near to justify me; though my own heart condemn me, yet he comforts me; though I deserve no better than hell and damnation, yet he hath of his mere love and free grace provided me a crown of grace, of comfort and of victory here, and of glory hereafter, if I will but be stedfast with him; and shall I leave such a master, such a friend, such a father? Besides, he is an *allseeing and heart-searching God*. Nothing is or can be hid from him. Can I steal away, and he not find me out? will not he that met with *Jonas* meet with me? *whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I fly from thy presence? - yea the darkness hideth not from thee, but the night shineth as the day, the darkness and the light are both alike to thee, Psal. 139. 7- 12.* What are all my excuses worth before him that knows the very inmost thoughts of my heart, and frame of my soul? he is a *just and a jealous God*. If he find me among his enemies, woe be to me; I must expect to fare no otherwise than they fare. Nay, Satan him-

himself may, for ought I know, in some respects escape better than such a one as I. Again he is an *almighty God*. If he be mine enemy, who can befriend me: infinitely better I were to provoke all the princes upon earth, yea, and the princes of darkness too, than to provoke him. What did *Pharaoh* get by hardning his heart against him? what did *Israel* get by backsliding from him? what did *Judas* get by denying his Lord and master? did ever any harden his heart against him and prosper? nay, lastly, he is a *faithful God*. I never found him worse than his word, but often times better. I have cried unto him in my trouble, and he hath delivered me. How often hath he answered before I have called, and while I have been speaking he hath heard, and done for me more than I looked for? he never deceived me; how shall I then (if I could) deceive him? can I backslide from such a God? O my soul! canst thou find in thy heart to do it? yea, have I not covenanted the contrary? how then shall I look him in the face another day? away then all ye alluring *Delilahs*, ye carnal pleasures, riches, honors, hopes, fears, and what ever else it be that would steal away my heart, and cause my foot to slip; the Lord alone is my God, and him will I serve. Sirs! this is the way to get your hearts fixed. Work up truths to some holy and lively convictions, and these convictions to solemn resolutions

solutions and the resolutions to answerable performances.

*Dir. 5. 5. Study thy duty better.* Understand and consider what the work of a Christian is, both in the *sweetness*, and in the *weight and consequence* of it. That is not like to hold long that doth not please you; nor is that like to please you long, that is not lookt upon as a matter of some consequence to you.

*I. 1. In the sweetness of it.* Labour to experience that confessed, and yet contradicted truth; *Pro. 3. 17. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace.* Observe, it is not onely her *end*, but her *way*, that which the flesh is wont to be so prejudic'd against, as if it were grievous and intollerable. All conclude, that that which wisdom leads unto, is an excellent and blessed thing. Eternal salvation (at least as every one, according to his own heart, conceits of it) is a desirable thing indeed; but 'tis the narrow way and straight gate, that offends them. Now the wise man, who could here speak it by experience, assures you, not onely from his own knowledge, but from the spirit of God, that the very worst of wisdoms ways are ways of pleasantness. Not onely some of her ways; but *her ways* indefinitely, and without exception; and *all her paths* universally. They are not onely the *ways to peace*, but *of peace*, nay, peace it self, both actively and passively. Some ways there  
are



are that are neither safe nor pleasant; others pleasant, but not safe; some safe, but not very pleasant; but the ways of wisdom are both safe and pleasant. The way of duty which is one of wisdoms roughest ways, is the way of communion with God. *Thou wilt shew me the path of life; in thy presence is fullness of joy, at thy right hand are pleasures for evermore,* Psal. 16. 11. The path of life is the path of obedience. This path shall lead me into thy presence, not only of immediate vision hereafter, but of spiritual communion here; and in this presence I shall find fulness of joy, and a taste of those pleasures which are at thy right hand for evermore. This is the Saints heaven upon earth. Walking with God in duty is next to walking with God in glory. *There be many that say, who will shew us any good? Lord lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon us* [thy light to direct us in our way, and thy countenance to encourage us in our way] *hereby thou hast put gladness in my heart, more than in the time that their corn and their wine increased,* Psalm 4. 5, 6. The actual joys and comforts of a Christian flow from his walking with God. Grace and peace are a twin of the same womb; or like the Sun and the Moon, this receiving its light and lustre from that. It is never better with a Christian, than when he is hardest at work for God. Sirs! believe this, and then reason with your own souls. Shall I  
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forlake such a master, whose service is perfect liberty, to enthrall my self to the world, the flesh and the Devil? with whom I shall never enjoy one hours true content? always in bondage to the tyranny of insatiable lusts; and gall'd with the secret fears of conscience, while I hang hovering by the rotten thred of a frail life, over the mouth of that bottomless pit? Would not the *Olive-tree* leave his fatness, nor the *Fig-tree* his sweetness, nor the *Vine* his Wine to be promoted over the trees? How much worse than the bramble then should I be to leave infinitely more than all this, and that not to be promoted, but to be enslaved to these traitors and enemies of my soul?

*Object.* But have you not told us that we must repent, and have our hearts broken for sin? That we must deny our selves, and take up our crosses, and part with that which is as near to us as our right eyes, or right hands; and those that will live godly in Christ Jesus must suffer persecution, and not expect their rest here? Who then can take these to be such pleasant ways?

*Answ.* I might refer you for this to what was said before; yet lest it should be desired again here, and to take off all secret prejudices, that are naturally rooted in the heart against the good ways of God, I shall tell you further, that there are these three things which the Christian hath to sweeten all this to him, and which are

are enough to sweeten this, and a great deal more.

1. *Their love to God.* Was *Jacob's* fourteen years service nothing, think you? yet the love which he had for *Rachel* made them to seem but as a few days. Have you never found your affections carried out towards any thing in the world? and hath not this love sweetened both hard and hazardous undertakings for the obtainment of it? Love makes hard work easie, and heavy burdens light. Your own experience cannot but be full of instances of this nature. *Love is strong as death* (says *Solomon*) *many waters cannot quench love, neither can the floods drown it*, Cant. 8. 6, 7. Love is as oyl to the wheels that makes all go on pleasantly. *The love of Christ constraineth us*, 2 Cor. 5. 14. The love of Christ draws out love to Christ, and this makes every duty a pleasure. *Omnia vincit amor*. Love hath a kind of omnipotency in it: crosses are as crowns, persecutions an honour, self-denial as meat and drink, gall and wormwood as the honey and honey-comb where love dwells.

2. *Their influence from God.* A burden is heavy or light, according to the strength of him that bears it. A giant doth not feel that which a dwarf cannot stand under. 'Tis not the greatness of the burden, but the want of strength that makes it hard to be born. But  
now

now, this supply the Saints have from Christ their head and fountain. *I can do all things through Christ which strengthneth me*, Phil. 4. 13. By this means it was that the martyrs could make so light of all their sufferings, and triumph over the flames; as *Bainham* profess'd, when part of his limbs were consum'd in the fire, that he felt no more pain, than if he were on a bed of down; but it was to him as a bed of roses. Let my work be what it will, so that my strength be but answerable.

3. *Their hope of an eternal reward.* This makes the roughest of wildoms ways pleasant. How patiently and gladly doth the Husbandman toil and drudge among the laborious and dirty clods, in wind and weather, frost and heat, early and late, and all this is sweetned by the hopes of a fruitful harvest? How chearfully doth the emboldned Souldier rush upon the very mouths of cannons, and make light of knocks and cuts, in hope of the victory? Should the Christian look only on present things, and lift his eyes no farther than his feet, and that dirty unpleasant step or two that is immediately before him, and consult only with flesh and blood about it, it were enough indeed to discourage him; but what was that which swallowed up all this with *Moses*, and animated him to chuse rather to suffer affliction with the people of God, than to enjoy the pleasures of sin for a season, esteeming the reproach

reproach of Christ greater riches, than the treasures of Egypt: He had respect unto the recompence of reward, Heb. 11. 25. 26. As God hath proposed the reward for us to aim at, and for our encouragement, so may we propose it to our selves for our comfort, and quickning, though not for our supreme end. Surely this one thing is enough to sweeten all, *Tendimus in Latium*. Though it be a dark entry, it is a state-ly and delightfome palace it leads to. Home will make amends for all. The Saints look beyond the short stage of this life, be their way never so uncomfortable in it self, yet 'tis but a stride or two and they are over. Wherefore (says the Apostle) comfort one another with these words, 1 *Theff.* 4. 18.

2. *In the weight, and consequence of it.* Know that on your present obedience depends your eternal happiness. *Verily I say unto you, that ye which have followed me in the regeneration, when the son of man shall sit in the throne of his glory, ye also shall sit upon twelve thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel, Mat. 19. 28.* Ye that follow me now shall rest with me then. Ye that fight the good fight now, shall triumph then. *If we suffer, we shall also reign with him if we deny him, he will also deny us, 2 Tim. 2. 12.* This is your sowing time, look what now you sow, that shall you hereafter reap. He that sows tares, cannot rationally expect to reap wheat. He that sows to the flesh must resolve

2.



to reap φθῆγαν, *corruption*, Gal. 6. 7, 8. *Vitium, labem, interitum, perniciem*. Corruption both actively and passively. He that sows sin, shall reap sin, in the same kind, an hundred fold, which shall not be the least part of the sinners unhappiness. His sins shall multiply, and bring forth in an abundant, but an accursed harvest. As Heaven is the perfection and consummation of grace, so Hell is the accumulation and consummation of sin, as hath been said somewhere before. And besides, he shall not only reap sin, but this sin shall be his torment, and his shame; he shall reap death and destruction as the wages of it. So then, sinner! here is life and death before thee. Sit down now and consider whether thou wert best to chuse. If there be indeed such a happiness in a moments pleasure, ease or honour, thou mayest take it. If thy soul be of no more value or consequence, than the soul of a beast: If the miseries of the damned, and the loss of eternal happiness be but justing matters: If Heaven be not worth a little self-denial, thou mayest take thy course: but when thou comest to be of another mind, and shalt too late be convinc'd of thy madness, remember that thou wert fairly warn'd.

*Dir. 6.* 6. *Study the world better.* And that in these two respects; what it would do with thee, and what it can do for thee.

1. 1. *What it would do with thee, shouldst thou grieve.*

give up thy self to it. What did the Philistines with Sampson, Judges 16. 21. They took him and put out his eyes, and brought him down to Gaza, and bound him with fetters of brass, and he did grind in the prison-house. The very same usage thou must look for from the world. It will put out thine eyes. What the Law says of a gift or bribe, Exod. 23. 8. *A gift blindeth the wise*; the same may we say of all worldly things; they blind the eyes. Cast dust in a man's eyes, and you know it is the way to put them out. Those that are devoted to the earth are like the *Moles* that are bred in it, *oculis capti*, deprived of their sight: And hence it is that they cannot see the snare that is before them, but fall into it, and are taken in it, as the Apostle testifies, 1 Tim. 6. 9. And having thus blinded thee, it will bring thee down, it may be, to Gaza, which signifies a *store-house*. It will smile upon thee, that it may the more effectually bewitch and captivate thee; for nothing is more dangerous than the world's smiles; but rather it will bring thee down to *Azab*, as it is in the original, *a place of strength*, *ut ab i.e.* it will bring thee into bondage to it, though *ut robur*. by consent indeed, which is by so much the worse. It will bind thee as it were in fetters of brass or steel, and make thee to grind in the prison-house. It will enslave thee body and mind, that thou shalt not dare, as it were, to bestow that time in praying, reading, hear-

ing, meditating, and the like, or to make bold with thy own estate in relieving God's poor, or promoting the interest of religion, or maintaining the cause of Christ, nor to spend those serious thoughts on the affairs of thy soul, which the perishing estate of it requires, and the penal laws of thy maker command, unless some other vain-glorious lust call for it, and blast it *in ipso fieri*, corrupting both the principle and performance of thy best things. Alas! how many such befooled slaves are there in the world, yea, and among professors of the first magnitude too, that will not be perswaded so much as to mistrust it?

2. *What it can do for thee, should God give it up to thee.* What doth the rich and pleasant pastures do for the fatted beast? so much indeed, if you have a mind to the slaughter-house, the world may do for you. It may pamper thy flesh, but will have the same influence on thy soul as the *Israelites Quails* had on theirs. 'Tis the saying of the Ancient, that the world in it self is neither good nor evil; but we find by experience, that, through the corruption of our nature, it ordinarily proves evil to those that possess it. Like poison, first it raises, then it ruins; first blows up the bubble, then bursts it. Sirs! this the world can do for you, it can feed you for a day of slaughter. Again, it may deck thy body with those glittering spangles, that are so admir'd in  
the

*Psal. 106. 15.*  
compared  
with *Numb.*  
*11. 19, 20.*

the eyes of fools; but it strips thy soul and discovers its nakedness. It can set thee aloft above the rest of thy fellow worms; but is it safe to be set on a pinnacle? It may give thee an exemption and immunity from those servile terms, unto which others are subjugated: but ordinarily men are never more bound, than when most at their own liberty. What was once said of the inhabitants of *Asia*, is true of most in the world, *Si libertate fruerentur mali, si servirent, boni essent*. Give them their liberty and you spoil them; but keep them under service, and they may be worth something. We may say to those that seek to set their nests on high in this world, as Christ once answered the sons of *Zebedee*, *Ye know not what ye ask*. Mat. 26. 25 Can ye bear that burden ye so long for? 'Twas wisely and Christian-like answered by *Abdalonimus*, when *Alexander* came to advance him from his low and mean estate to the kingdom of *Sidon*, and questioning him how he had born his former poverty, being originally descended from the seed royal, he answer'd, *Nihil habenti, nihil defuit*. While I had nothing, I Cant. wanted nothing; but *Utinam eodem animo regnum pati possim*. I wish I may be as well able to bear my future honour, as I could my former hunger. The world may court thee with a fit of mad mirth; but what wilt thou do when it shall be turned into weeping and gnawing of teeth? What can a talent of lead on thy

Mat. 13. 22.

thy shoulders do for thee? or a load of clay on thy back, or a mill-stone about thy neck? the same may the world do for thy soul. What do the bryars and thorns advantage the lilly? or the tares and thistles profit the corn? the like mayest thou expect from the world. Oh! that men were wise, that they understood this! The world is that great thief, that steals away the heart from Christ. Therefore says the Apostle, *The world is crucified to me, and I to the world*; Gal. 6, 14. A thief it is, and so it is serv'd; the world is crucified for sacrilege, and I for consent; but here's the difference, the world hangs as the impenitent Thief, but the believer as Christ, though dead to the world, yet alive still unto God. Believe it Sirs! either you are crucified to the world, or crucified to Christ: if you are alive to the one, you are dead to the other. *If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him*, 1 John 2. 15. Now sinner! set thy self to study this great truth, and commune with thine own heart. Is there such an inconsistency between God and the world? What then can I think of my self? have not the cares of the world and the love of riches the greatest share in my affections? Are they not the concerns of the world that most please and delight me; or else most trouble and disquiet me? and is this an infallible Scripture-truth, that the love of the world, and the love of the Father are as light

and



and darkness? Shall I, dare I then harbour the sacrilegious thieves any longer? Shall I bestow this heart upon Mammon, which God calls for and claims as his? Must the world be lov'd, and Christ hated? the world obeyed and Christ despised? God forbid! Nay, let me be poor, let me be contemned, scorned, trampled on, let me be cloathed in rags, & beg my bread, rather than this cursed harlot should so much as stand in competition with Christ, or rob him of any part of his due in me. Alas, when the world hath done its utmost, and I have all I can have, 'tis but food and raiment, and, it may be, a short fit of brutish pleasure, but no real satisfaction: He that hath a great deal less than what I have, or what I long for, is ordinarily better contented, and lives a merrier life. My cares are my burden, which oppresses and depresses, not my body only, but my very soul; and shall I wilfully thus enslave my self then? 'Tis true, these things are my pilgrims-staffs, but shall I break my back with them? or chuse a Weavers beam to walk by? Yea, and should I have my hearts desire, what would it prefit me without the blessing? no more than cloaths or cordials can profit dead men. Nay, what if God should in earnest give me my choice, and bid me take this for my portion? where am I then? How will the world befriend me at death? What can it do for me at judgment? Oh! that God would perswade both you and

me to make this some of our daily study, and solemn meditation. 'Tis much for want of this that we are so apt to start aside. What an antidote might this be against a back-sliding spirit? Is apostacy the sin you would watch against? know then for certain, the heavier the wheels of your affections are charged with these terrene and earthly things, the more naturally and violently they draw downwards towards their center. Mistake not, the world is a pully, not a wing. Hence it is that we so often find it so hard to get up the hill, and to mount heaven-ward: the heart is overcharged with the pleasures or cares of this life, too heavy laden with this dirt and clay, and till we unhitch and get loose from this load, it will never be otherwise. *Wherefore, seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witness, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin that doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, Heb. 12. 1.*

*Dir. 7.* 7. Study Jesus Christ better, and that in these three respects.

1. 1. *What he hath done for thee.* This is the direction and the encouragement too which the Apostle subjoyns to his exhortation in the fore-cited Heb. 12. 1, 2. *Let us lay aside every weight, and run with patience, looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.* Sirs! here's a large field for your thoughts and affections to work in. *Looking unto Jesus; me-  
think*

think the very word should make your hearts leap for joy. Here's an object to draw your eyes, if you delight to look on that which is excellent and glorious. *And I if I be lifted up will draw all men unto me*, John 12. 32. who is therefore called *The desire of all nations*, Hag. 2. 7. Hath he not both done and suffered enough to make himself precious to a company of undone wretches? Consider from whence he came; even from the throne of eternal glory; and left the sweet embraces of his Father's bosom, that he might open the compassionate arms of his love to miserable sinners. He came not to avenge himself on his enemies, but to pity and save as many of them as would accept of deliverance by him. He came not in the unaccessible beams of his own heavenly brightness, but in the dark veil of flesh and blood; in the form of a servant; made under the law, both the preceptive & penal power of it; was obedient unto the death, even the painful, shameful and accursed death of the Cross; obey'd for us, that our disobedience might not be imputed; and died for us, that the death which we had deserved might not be inflicted. He died, and rose again, ascended, and is still interceding for us. Now sinners, doth such a friend deserve no other than to be slighted by you? Do but cast your eyes on that infernal lake, where you must have wallowed in flames of fire and brim-

stone to all eternity, had it not been for this your Saviour. Listen a little to those direful shrieks and wailings of the damned there. Is it nothing to be delivered from such a pit? reflect then in your selves, were you not by nature children of wrath as well as any of these, and under the same condemnation? and whence is it that you had not been with them long ago? Hath Christ done nothing for you in undertaking to pay your debts, to bear your curse, and to reconcile you to the Father, in exercising so much patience towards you, and care of you? And what! doth a little ease, or credit, or wealth, or pleasure, or a filthy lust deserve to be preferred before such a friend? Can you find it in your hearts to requite him so? What would the world say of you? What monsters of ingratitude would you appear to be, should you so requite a friend among men, that had done the thousandth part of so much for you? O Sirs! set your selves to ponder these things in your hearts, till you have brought them to mature and fixed resolutions.

3.      2. *What he hath promised to you, and on what conditions. Godliness hath the promise of the life that now is, and of that which is to come, 1 Tim. 4. 8. He that spared not his own son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things, Rom. 8. 32. What would you? nay, what can you have more? Whether Paul, or Apollos, or Cephas,*

phas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours, and ye are Christs, and Christ is Gods, 1 Cor. 3. 22, 23.

If heaven and earth be enough to enrich you, you shall beenriched. If ye abide in me, and my words abide in you, ye shall ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you; John 15. 7. that

is, whatsoever your sanctified wills shall regularly desire. The promise is beyond comparison, and the condition beyond exception. Be but faithful to me, abide in me, and let my words abide in you; do not play the hypocrites nor apostates, *Et erunt mihi cætera* cure, I will see that you shall want for nothing. Here's the promise for your encouragement, and the condition for your caution.

What is that you would have more, or on more reasonable terms? Ask what you will and it shall be done. Can the world, the flesh or Satan do so for you? If your own reason and experience cannot yet evince the contrary, go try these thy lovers once more, put them to it, see if *Mammon* will bestow his riches or honours on you for the asking. Ask the world for ease when you are in pains; Ask it for health when you are on sick-beds; Ask it for peace when you are in trouble, or so much as patience to bear what it cannot ease you of; Ask whatever you want, go, shew your skill, arm your selves with what arguments or affections you can, cry aloud, cut your selves, as



those did, 1 *Kings* 18. 28. and then come and shew us your alms ; let us see, if it be but ask and have. No, my brethren, it is not in the power of the world to make such a promise, at least not to perform it. The Devil indeed made a great boast to our dear Saviour, *Matth.* 4. 8, 9. when he had shewed him all the kingdoms of the world and the glory of them, promises to give him all these things if he would fall down and worship him ; but it was none of his to give. Nay, how rightly devil-like was his impudence, to pretend to make an offer of it to him, who was Lord of all ? Here was blasphemy, and treason in the very offer, *For the earth is the Lords, and the fulness thereof, the world and they that dwell therein*, *Psal.* 24. 1. And it being Christ's, it is his peoples, as being co-heirs with him. What then do all the world's or Satan's promises signifie, but meer delusions and mockeries : as if your servant should promise to give you that which is your own inheritance before, and which he hath not the least title to, if you will but become his bond-man. Would this be a likely way to tempt you into slavery ? or would it not rather stir up your indignation ? Sirs ! if once you forsake Christ, you forgo all the promises, which are the riches, comfort, and glory of a Christian ; but cleave to him, and walk stedfastly with him, and there shall not one *joy* of all those many exceeding great

great and precious promises, which you find in Scripture fail you. *The Lord is with you while ye be with him, and if ye seek him, he will be found of you, but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you,* 2 Chron. 15. 2.

3. *What he expects of you.* He that hath done all this for you expects something from you. Where he hath bestowed husbandry he expects fruit. 'Tis true, he doth not expect that his crop should pay for his cost, he knows it cannot, though the fault be not in his seed, but in his soil; yet an harvest there must be, though but as the shaking of an Olive-tree, or as the gleaning grapes when the vintage is done; yet that little must be good, sound and not rotten, fruit unto God, and not to your selves, though not commensurate to what you have received, yet it must be your utmost. *Cursed be the deceiver that hath in his flock a male, and voweth and sacrificeth unto the Lord a corrupt thing,* Mal. 1. 14. You must love the Lord your God, and serve him with all your heart, and with all your soul. Love is that active and all-commanding principle that enlivens every grace. Love the Lord and serve him, love and fear him, love and delight in him, love and praise him, love and rely on him. He that hath the heart hath all; therefore, *My son give me thy heart,* Prov. 23. 26. *Love is the fulfilling of the law,* Rom. 13. 10. Both the matter and the motive. Sit down

down now and spread this matter before thee. Hath my dear Redeemer both done and suffered all this for such an undone wretch as I; to save me from the pit of Hell, to reconcile me to his Father, to purchase me an inheritance with the Saints, to deliver me from the guilt and power of sin, and to wash me in his own blood! hath he so graciously undertaken to stand my surety, and sealed his Covenant to me, of an everlasting kingdom? Oh! what manner of person ought I to be in all holy conversation and godliness? Should I not study to walk to all well-pleasing? Hath he given me the adoption and relation of a child, and inheritance of an heir, and shall I not credit my heavenly patronage? Hath he made his yoke so easie, and his paths so pleasant, and promised to perform all my works in me, with me, and for me, and shall I draw back? May I now walk as I have been wont, after the course of this world, in the vanity of my heart? Is it not reason that I should be his, who hath bought me at so dear a rate, and not my own? Would the *Egyptians* sell themselves, with all that they had, to *Joseph* for bread, and shall not I as willingly part with all to *Jesus* for that Bread of Life? Shall they be more forward to be *Pharaoh's* servants, than I to be the Lord's freeman? Oh my soul! do such and such actions, such and such ends, and principles, such and such frothy, vain glorious or carnal

commu-

communication become one that is redeemed from his vain conversation? do these slavish fears and base compliances, these cowardly and dishonorable shifts become one that is lifted under such a captain? doth this backwardness to duty, and coldness in it, become one that hath experimentally tasted that the Lord is gracious? do these censorious slights of my brethren and readiness to aggravate their infirmities, become one that is related to the God of love? or acquainted with his own heart? set the bellows of thy thoughts and affections to these things, till thy meditation kindle into resolution.

*Listed*

8. *Study eternity better.* And that also in 3. Dir. 8. respects.

1. *The joys of eternity on the one hand.* Wind up thy soul above the tempestuous region of this lower world; get thee up to the *Pisgah* of divine contemplation; set thine eyes towards the borders of the promised land; get a taste of those heavenly *clusters*, a glimpse of those ravishing glories, though the eye of sense fall short, the eye of faith, by the help of meditation, may reach very far, and give thee the evidence of things not seen. One great reason why our hearts are so little affected with them, is because our thoughts are so little exercised on them. Well then! let thy mind and affections fix and dwell here. Think how it will be with thee shortly, when thou shalt quit this

this house of clay, and put on immortality; when grace shall be perfected and swallowed up in glory, when patience, repentance, self-denial shall be done away for ever, and faith and hope turned into fruition; when thou shalt never fear a temptation more, nor mistrust thy own weakness, nor any more complain of a hard, proud, worldly, wanton or deceitful heart, of wandring thoughts, or of dead or carnal affections; when the days of thy service shall be over, and all tears shall be wipt from thine eyes; when thou shalt enjoy what thou so longest and pantest after, and infinitely more than thy heart can wish; when thou shalt for ever dwell with him that loved and died for thee, and never grieve him more; when thou shalt enjoy the amicable fellowship of the holy angels of God, who were thy invisible and vigilant guardians in this vale of tears here, and protected thee from so many unseen dangers; when love shall be perfected, and the saints united, as the natural members of the same body. Think with thy self what a day'twill be, when thy heavenly nuptials shall be solemniz'd, and thou shalt be received into the everlasting arms of our dearest Lord Jesus, as his loyal and beautiful bride. Ah! how wouldst thou beastonished with admiration and joy, to see what he hath in the kingdom of his Father laid up for them that love and fear him? the more thou habitest



tuatest thy thoughts to these things, the less  
 bewitching influence thou wilt find the world  
 to have on thee. O lanch out thy soul into  
 this pleasant Ocean; hoise thy sails, and weigh  
 thine anchors, and then pray for a fresh gale to *Gale*  
 run thee out of the noise of this *bedlam* earth,  
 out of sight of this glittering *bubble*, and be-  
 yond the magnetick force of this ensnaring  
*load-stone*, till thou canst say with the Apostle,  
*our conversation is in heaven.* And when thou *Phil. 3. 20.*  
 hast once gotten aloft, and bask'd thy soul a  
 little in these streams, which make glad the  
 city of our God; then cast back thine eyes on  
 this *dunghill*, and see how vile a thing it will  
 appear in thine eyes, and how undesirable a  
*dungeon* it is. Look back upon thy crosses,  
 fears, reproaches, scorns, losses, sorrows,  
 wants, pains, persecutions and miseries on the  
 one hand, and (which is worse than all this)  
 the corruptions, temptations, weakness, re-  
 lapses, accusations of conscience, ecclipses of  
 divine love, the tears and groans and doubts  
 and desertions on the other hand, wherewith  
 thy very soul is vext and torn on every side;  
 then retire into thy self and commune with  
 thine own heart. How unutterable is the dif-  
 ference between earth and heaven? surely that  
 is but a kind of *hell* to this, even in the fullest  
 affluence of it. O my soul! hath God indeed  
 so freely offered thee his heavenly glory, and  
 assur'd thee an eternal rest? hath he, who can-

not

not ly, promised thee all that bounty it self hath to bless thee with, if thou wilt but prove faithful and stedfast with him, and shall I, can I think of drawing back or starting aside? shall I be ashamed to own him, who was not ashamed to own me? what! shall I not hold out a little further? one step or two more and all shall be well.

2. *The torments and miseries of eternity on the other hand.* Hold thine ear a while at the doors of those chambers of death, the crannies of that infernal cave; listen to those ruthless groans and bitter yellings of poor damned wretches there, that gnash their teeth and curse their torments, and the days that ever they were born; what kind of language dost thou think thou mightst hear from them? what wouldst thou say, couldst thou but hear what *Judas* and *Lucian* and *Julian* and *Gardiner* and *Bonner* and other foul apostates are now crying out on? couldst thou but see them weltred in their unquenchable flames, wouldst thou long to be in their case? and account it a pleasure to bear the vengeance of the Almighty with them? canst thou think that all the threatnings of the righteous God are but so many bug-bears? or the terrors of awakened consciences, which have some foretastes of hell, but dreams and fantasies? dost thou hope to be able to sport with fire and brimstone, and live like a Salamander in the flames

flames of hell? will the fearful crue of those horrid spirits be as pleasant as thy good-fellows here? will the cutting *items* of a guilty conscience be as sweet, as that paradise thou art now dreaming of? I could run out into particulars here; but alas! it is not words will do; these are common truths in the notion of them; you have heard them over and over, and a thousand times more you may, and yet never the wiser, nor the better, until by serious meditation and application, they be effectually wrought on upon the heart and conscience. As it is not the bare receiving or having of money, that the trader lives on and thrives by, but the employing and improving it; so it is not your hearing, knowing or talking of these things, that will advantage you, but your thorow and practical believing, meditating and digesting of them.

3. *The endlessness both of these joys and miseries.* There is neither end nor intermission of the one nor of the other. The riches, pleasures and honors you enjoy here, are held only at the will of the donor, and at furthest but for term of life, that's their *vanity*. Your sorrows, losses and sufferings are also under the same date, bounded in by the narrow banks of the grave, within the strait limits of a short uncertain life, and this is the *comfort*. But here's an estate that knows no end; endless glory, and endless misery: This life is but in order to

that, a days preparation for an eternities possession. 'Twere well indeed for the sinner, if that life were as short as this, and as ill for the saint, if his eternity should ever expire; but God hath otherwise provided for both; that he may in both appear like himself. He will reward with *everlasting life*, Gal. 6. 8. and punish with *everlasting death*, 2 Thes. 1. 9. Here's a subject to swallow up your thoughts in, thousands and ten thousands of millions of years and of ages are nothing to eternity, consider now, shall I lose this eternal happiness to come, for a moments carnal pleasure in hand? were that as short a life as this, yet it were madness, but to run willfully upon endless wrath and vengeance, for so inconsiderable a trifle, as the sensual sweets of this life, must needs be somewhat worse than madness. Oh! what will my own reason and conscience say long enough, before an hundred years hence, when all the delightful remembrance of present enjoyments is both lost and embitter'd? Shall I now forsake him, that would freely and surely deliver me from the one, and invest me in the other, for fear of that loss of shame or hand ship, that this moment's labour may cost me? go ask the poor hungry prisoner, that is ready to eat the flesh of his own arm, what it comforts or profits him, now, to remember that he was once at a plentiful feast, where he eat his fill? alas! the fleeting comfort

fort of these things perishes with the using of them. Oh Sirs! spend more of your serious thoughts on eternity. You will shortly know more of it than I can now tell you. When ever the world smiles or flatters, do not onely look on it, but thorow it, and beyond it; take the line of scripture and of your own experience and measure it, you will find it to be but a span-long, an hand-breadth, a pleasant way perhaps, but it is but a stride over, and then is gone for ever. A bubble is a curious transparent thing, while it holds, but alas! what is't worth? do but touch it and it cracks and vanishes away, *sic transit gloria mundi*, such are the poor, thin, empty bubbles of worldly enjoiments. Now work on this truth practically on your judgments and consciences. Shall I leap off my rock, where I am safe, and cast my self into the sea to catch at a bubble? and forgo the substance to embrace a shadow? will not all the world (that are but in their right wits) cry out on me for a fool, *Lo this is the man that made not God his strength, but trusted in the abundance of his riches, and strengthened himself in his wickedness, Psal. 52. 7, Lo this is the man!* this miserable wretch, that hath not now a word to excuse himself, nor a rag to cover his shame, nor a drop to quench his thirst, or cool his tongue, nor a friend to open his mouth for him: this is he that was even now so happy, that sared so



sumptuously every day, that was so proud of himself, so fond of his flesh, so tender of his honor, so wise in his own eyes, that made such a bustle and was so applauded by the world; now see to what a pass all is come, and what his magnified wisdom and greatness hath

בָּרַךְ brought him to. Lo! this is the *mighty man*,

*Vir potens.*

that look'd so scornfully upon his brethren and expected so much honor, that boasted of his birth, his estate and self-sufficiency, and made himself his God. Clap your hands at him, wag the head, and lift up a shout against him: wring out the very dregs of shame, contempt, derision and scorn upon him. O sinner!

under what *mountain* or *rock* wilt thou be able to hide thy guilty face, when God shall set thee up for a laughing-stock before angels and men? *I will laugh at your calamity and mock when your fear cometh, Prov. 1. 26.*

Again, when the world frowns, or persecutes, look over all, fixe your eye on the other end of it: be it never so sharp, it is but short; be it what it will it is not hell. If a storm arise, you eye the cloud from whence it comes, if you can see beyond it, you know that it is but a shower and bear it with the more patience.

'Tis but a little while, and all these fears and snares, these sorrows and sighings shall flee away. *Though weeping endure for a night, joy shall come in the morning, Psal. 30. 5.*

Thus far I have proposed work for your meditation, to  
strengthen

strengthen and settle you at the heart : against all the assaults and wiles of a backsliding spirit.

9. *Take heed of loosing a praying opportunity.* Dir. 9. Either by intermission of the duty or remissness in it.

1. *By intermission of the duty.* Take heed 1. that your devotion be not onely a few religious moods. *Fits* in duty are wont to end in this *falling-sickneß*, the falling from duty. An intermittent pulle is observ'd by naturalists to be one dangerous symptome of a fatal *catastrophe*. Whatever you do, keep up your communion with God; let not the messenger of prayer be idle; let no weather nor evil tidings intercept this heavenly *post*. If you let down your correspondency, you loose your acquaintance and interest. Prayer is the great work of a believer, therefore, *Pray without ceasing*, 1 *Thess.* 5. 17. Keep up a spirit of prayer, be all ways in a praying frame, and ready on all opportunities to the act of prayer. Maintain a habit of penitent, fervent, holy, thankful desires and affections; by this means, the heart may be said to pray without ceasing, at all times, in all places, companies and employments, sleeping and walking; the heart prays, while these gracious affections and desires are maintain'd either actually or habitually. Write this *memento* upon this heart. *He that is not fit to pray is not fit to dy, and he that is not*

*fit to dy is not fit to live.* But then there are special times and seasons for the special acts of prayer, in the several kinds of it.

1. 1. There are the *common* or public prayers of the church, that is, of that particular part of the church, whereunto thou art related; I do not mean those idoliz'd *forms*, which have of late been such burning coals of strife and contention among the professors of the same faith; but those *common* or joint supplications of the church or congregation, in which God in his providence hath placed thee, according to the general rule and form of sound words delivered to the saints in scripture. Take heed of unnecessary intermissions in this; that neither through wretched sloth, profane contempt, or schismatical principles and unwarrantable grounds, you forsake the assembling your selves together (as often as you have opportunity, and may do it without partaking in other mens sins) as the manner of some is, who have first fallen off to *Independency*, on pretense of purer churches, thence to *Anabaptism*, thence to *Quakerism*, further than which they cannot well fall, till they fall into hell.
2. 2. There is more *private* or *domestick* prayer, for and with the family in which thou livest. Take heed of fits in this duty. Let it ever be the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the first and last performance of every day, *clavis diei & sera noctis*. Engrave this truth on thy heart, to loose

*a prayer is to loose a blessing.* A thousand times better be wanting at meal, than wanting at prayer.

3. There is *secret* prayer for thy closet-exercise. Take this for thy indispensable duty from *Matth. 6. 6.* and beware of intermissions in it. Constancy and evenness in secret duties, so it be not flat formality, or a designing hypocrisy, evidences more of a Christian; brings in more of advantage and comfort, than in those duties that are more public.

4. There is also *mental* or *ejaculatory* prayer, which the occasions and providences of every day and hour are ready to offer thee. Take heed of letting down communion with God in any of these. Inconstancy in duty argues a bad principle. Keep these coals of the sanctuary alive still on the altars of your hearts, yea, now, if ever, is a time for the people of God to pray. Times of provocation and tribulation should be times of supplication. Remember, he that prays but sometimes, is brother to him that prays not at all. Constancy and assiduity is that which crowns any duty; but he that wanders and roams off from the kings high-way, and falls into it but now and then, walks not like the honest traveller; but like the thief.

2. By *remissness in the duty.* *Qui frigide rogat docet negare,* cold requests are wont to be answered with cold returns. *Senec.* Keep up this duty

*Psal. 65. 2.*

ty then in the spirit and life of it. Ask as one that is convinc'd, that he is undone if he be denied, and as one that knoweth, that he hath to do with a God, that is both ready and able to answer, who hath called himself *the God that heareth prayer*. And why may we not borrow the Apostles words and apply them here? *1 Cor. 9. 10. For our sakes we doubt this is written, that he that ploweth should plow in hope, and he that thresheth in hope should be partaker of his hope.* Ploughing and threshing are hard & painful works; but this is that which sweetens all, they work in hope. Learn hence then to ply the duty of prayer as those that plow and thresh: do it with all your might, and encourage your selves in the hope that is set before you. You have to do with a God, and not with a finite creature, with the fountain, and not a cistern, a God of a gracious ear, a powerful hand, and a large heart, yea a God in promise to them that fear him. *Cry mightily to God, said the king of Nineveh, Jon. 3. 8.* His city and people were in danger. God had sent his prophet, as an herald of war to denounce judgment and destruction upon them. This doleful messenger they entertain, not (as *Jerusalem* was likely enough to have done) with a dungeon, or a shower of stones, but with sackcloth and ashes, with fasting and supplication and turning every man from his evil way. *Sirs! hath not God sent his Prophets and messengers*



sengers with the alarm of war and high displeasure at us : yet who hath believed their report ? nay, hath not the fire devoured on every side ? and how or when it shall be quenched God knows, yet who hath layd it to heart, further than their own private interests smart by it ? what ! must heathen *Nineveh* rise in judgment against Protestant *England* ? is it not yet time ? and may we not, with shame enough, learn of them to cry mightily to God, and to turn every one from his evil way, and from the violence that is in their hands ? oh let the sadness of our case awaken us ; let a divided, distressed church, a broken and bleeding state, the ominous conjunctions of aspiring enemies, the deep counsels of designers, and hazardous posture of affairs awaken us. If past judgments be already forgotten, let present evils be consider'd ; and let these dreadful thunder-claps, that are yet breaking over our heads, bring us to our knees before God. *For Zions sake hold not your peace, and for Jerusalems sake rest not, until the righteousness thereof go forth as brightness, and the salvation thereof as a lamp that burneth, which was the holy Prophets course, Isa. 62. 1.* Yet you may pray in hope ; though the floods of great waters are rising higher and higher, we may yet wade unto a throne of grace : Yet our God is calling on us, as by his Prophet *Joel*, *Turn ye* Joel. 2. 12, *even to me, with all your heart, and with fasting* 13. 14.

and with weeping and with mourning, and rent your heart and not your garments; and turn unto the Lord your God, for he is gracious and merciful - - who knoweth, if he will return and repent and leave a blessing behind him. Who knoweth what the power of prayer is? or what the return of prayer may be? who knows, but that after all our deprivations and depravations, after all our apostacies, divisions, spoils and calamities, he may see us a *quiet habitation*, a reclaimed, united, refined and flourishing people? who knoweth how far a gracious God may be prevailed with, who is easy to be intreated, by those that seek him with the whole heart? though the cry of our sins be gone up to heaven, and our guilty hearts ready to give up all for lost; yet in God may faith discover a *cape of hope*. Stir up your selves then, and lay hold on him, with *Jacob's* resolution, not to let him go till he bleſs you. Remember, if once you begin to flag in this duty of prayer, you will quickly flag and grow cold in every duty, and decay in every grace.

*Dir. 10.* Take heed to thy company. Make a right choice of it, and make a right use of it.

- I. 1. *Make a right choice.* Let the choice of this company be grounded on, and regulated by thy choice of Christ. Let thy communion with the children flow from fellowship with the Father. Love them that are begotten

for

for his sake that did beget them: Yet not on the like principles, as the beasts, in whom mere customs and haunt beget an ardent zeal for their fellows. *Ista est amicitia consuetudinis, non rationis* [necum religionis,] *habent illam & pecora*, the love of beasts, not of men, much less of Christians. Nor as *Laban*, who could gladly entertain a *Jacob* for his flocks and herds sake. But alas! are there not too many *Labans* even among the stricter sort of professors, that could bid an *Esau* as welcome as a *Jacob* on this interest account: some of the vilest of men shall be their companions, if they may but get by them, and that without the least dislike or rebuke, and doubtless not without some participation of their sins. If likeness is the ground of fellowship, then surely this argues a likeness of heart and nature, let the profession be never so unlike: let love indeed be always the ground of your fellowship, but not self-love, that's brutish and carnal, not lust-love, that's sensual and devillish; but God and Christ-love, that's Christian. *I am companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts, Psal. 119. 63.* If Christ lifted up in the hearts and lives of his saints, will not draw this heart towards them, 'tis for want of that spiritual similitude and participation of natures, that this load-stone hath no alluring influence on thee. *Qualiscunque quis fuerit, cum tali se coniungit.* I were both unnatural and

and dangerous for *doves* and *vulturs* to flock together; therefore, *he that worketh deceit shall not dwell in my house: he that telleth lies shall not tarry in my sight*, *Psal. 101. 7.* Will lions and lambs dwell together as brethren? *locally* and *politically* they may and ought, but not *morally*. They seldome meet in close society, but one or both is secretly wounded; either the wicked hardned by some real or interpreted miscarriages; or the righteous snared by a sinful approbation or silence. *Can a man take fire in his bosom and his cloaths not be burnt?* *Pro. 6. 27.* *Make no friendship with an angry man, and with a furious man thou shalt not go, lest thou learn his ways, and get a snare to thy soul,* *Pro. 22. 25.* The wicked are infectiously diseased, and communion with them is the ready way to derive the infection from them. Among the *Philistines*, *David* was fain to dissemble and take arms against *Israel*. The least evil we ordinarily get by evil company (as *Nazienz* once warned *Cæsarius*) is to be fulfilled with their smoak, if not burnt with their fire. Therefore, *go from the presence of a foolish man, when thou perceivest not in him the lips of knowledge*, *Pro. 14. 7.* And good reason for this advise, for, *he that walketh with wise men shall be wise, but a companion of fools shall be destroyed*, *chap. 13. 20.* This was *Israel's* case. *Psal. 106. 34, 35, 36.* They did not destroy the nations concerning whom the Lord had

1 Sam. 21. 13.  
chap. 27. 9  
chap. 29. 2.

com-

commanded them ; but were mingled among the heathen and learned their works, and they served their idols, which were a snare unto them. As thou regardest the safety of thy soul then ; take heed to thy company ; nothing in the world more apt to corrupt and seduce thee, to steal away thy heart and blind thy eyes and bewitch thy affections. How many thousands have perisht this way, who were once under some hopeful capacities of better things ? how many sad complaints mixt with bitter execrations, have we heard from the jail and the gallows of the mischievous effects of evil company. He that keeps company with the wicked, soon becomes such a one as his companion, whether it be in matters of judgment and opinion, or in matters of practice and conversation. Take heed then, with whom you associate, beware of dogs, if you please them, they will defile you, if you anger them they will bite you. *Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them, Eph. 5. 11.* If you catch by those that are sinking, you must expect to sink with them. *Joseph* himself, by living in *Pharaoh's* court, had learn'd the court-oath, to swear by the life of *Pharaoh*. Oh ! how sly doth the devil act by those instruments, and steal on an evil habit, ere you are aware. 'Twill be a very hard matter to keep your garments unspotted, while you ly among the pots.

*Undique  
scandala nos  
obsident &  
innumeri  
vitiis refer-  
tus est mun-  
dus, quæ ex-  
singuunt ob-  
salem cor-  
rumpunt in  
nobis legem  
Dei & legis  
studium.  
Vatabi.*



pots. Satan hath several ways and methods to ensnare you. At first, it may be, you are ready to reprove some of the grosser sort of vices in your companions: but reproofs, being entertained with a scoff, or in a merry, jocular or carnal manner, at length this duty, being barren, is divorc'd and laid aside, and you begin to take it for a duty to be silent: by degrees it becomes familiar, and is no more a grief to you, nor scarce observed by you. Next you are drawn to consent, to approve and to act with them; then, if you meet with any inward remorse of conscience, they must help to jest and recreate it away with you. If any friend be so faithful, as to reprove you, this shall be censur'd for pride and envy and ill-will, and all must be condemned for hypocrites, or more precise than wise, that are not of your loose principles; and the means that are used to reclaim you, do but fill you with the stronger prejudices, especially if the designs of some worldly interest ly at the bottom. Again, if such company as is outwardly profane seem too dirty and scandalous, Satan will find you a cleaner way, with those that make a fair shew in the flesh, as the Apostle says, *Gal. 6. 12.* but yet secretly constrain you to circumscribe your minds and consciences to the proportion of their erroneous, heretical or idolatrous judgments, and by this means plucks out your eyes, and then leads you blindfold from one opi-

opinion to another, till he reduce you to flat Atheism, and end you in eternal destruction. Take heed then with whom you associate your selves; let not God find you in fellowship with his enemies, further than apparent duty requires; lest you partake both of their sins, and of their plagues. *What communion hath light with darkness?* 2 Cor. 6. 14. 'Twas time for *Loth* to forsake *Sodom*, when God was about to rain hell out of heaven, as one says, upon it. It is reported of *John* the Apostle, that he would not abide in the same bath, where *Cerinthus* the heretick was. Yet if you should escape the fatal mischief you are in danger of, you will not be able to avoid the reproach of the common proverb, *inquitur ex socio*, birds of a feather will flock together. A mans companion is oftentimes a truer character of him, than his own profession. Tell me, (O thou whom thy soul loveth) say as the spouse, where thou feedest, where thou makest thy flock to rest at noon; for why should I be as one that turneth aside by the flocks of thy companions? Cant. 1. 7. My eyes, says David, shall be upon the faithful in the land, that they may dwell with me; he that walketh in a perfect way (or perfect in the way) he shall serve me; Psal. 101. 6. Saint *John*s character of a child of God, is love to the brethren, 1 *John* 3. 14. But where there is a heart of love, there will be a hand of fellowship. Well then, resolve with

with holy David, and say in thine heart with him, *Psal. 119. 115. Depart from me ye evil doers, for I will keep the commandments of my God.* Away from me, ye workers of iniquity, your course and mine are as contrary as heaven and hell. You will serve your God; but I must serve mine. I must walk humbly, but ye will walk in pride. I must lead a righteous, sober, and godly life; but yours are the paths of oppression, excess, blasphemy, &c. I must wash my garments, and keep them unspotted, but you will wallow in the mire, and draw me into the same pollutions. Away from me my ears are tortured to hear that dear and dreadful name thus worried and torn by you; my heart is pained; my eyes melt with grief to behold the sad tragedies of your ungodly lives; my soul is vexed with your filthy conversation. *2 Pe. 1. 7. 8.* Away I away from me ye wicked! if ye will needs murder your selves, let not me be thought accessory. Your insinuations and examples are a snare to me; the fires you are kindling, and the sparks you are compassing your selves with, endanger my roof, which is in it self, as combustible as yours.

Yet still remember here, that I am not advising you to that proud, supercilious, self-conceited singularity, which the Prophet mentions, *Isa. 65. 5. Which say, stand by thy self; come not near to me, for I am holier than thou; these are a smock in my nose* (says God) *a*

*fire*

*fire that burneth all the day.* There is a middle way between singularity and sensuality, which is easie enough to be found by those that delight to walk in it. Nor do I go to perswade you to a monastical, superstitious, unprofitable life; as if there were none in the world, or very few good enough for your company. Solitariness may be as dangerous as the worst of company. *Va soli, Wo to him that is alone,* Eccles. 4. 10. Satan is many times most busie with those that are most solitary. Nor can we hope to meet with none but good company, while we sojourn here in the tents of Kedar. *I wrote in an epistle not to keep company with fornicators; yet not altogether with the fornicators of this world, or with the covetous, or extortioners, or with idolaters; for then must ye needs go out of the world,* 1 Cor. 5. 9, 10. The Apostle would not be understood to forbid that civil commerce even with the worst of men, which the law of nature and Christian charity doth require in order to the good, either of soul or body; but he speaks particularly of avoiding that intimate and publick communion with scandalous persons, which was lawfully held with them, while they walked orderly: that they be avoided as heathens for the shaming and reclaiming of them; but this doth not debar from any civil office of love as occasions offer, which is due to them as men, or the using of any regular means to re-

cover them to the faith, and to their former estate and priviledges.

2. *Make a right use of it.* Let all company thou fallest into, as far as possible, either better thee, or be bettered by thee. Take heed of adventuring on evil company, without a warrantable call; but being so call'd, or plac'd by the providence of God, set the stricter watch over thy self, that it may be true of thee in a spiritual sence, which the Poets talk of the river *Tigris*, that it runs through the lake *Arthusa*, and yet neither the waters nor the fishes mingle themselves with those of the lake. Herein lies the excellency and wisdom of a Christian, to be *blameless and harmless, the sons of God without rebuke, in the midst of a crooked and perverse nation, and to shine as lights in the world*, Phil. 2. 15. 'Tis observed by Naturalists, that those are the sweetest and most fragrant Roses that grow nearest unto stinking weeds. If God hath so placed thee, take heed of contracting the ill savour of their practices or principles; but labour rather to communicate thy sweetness to them; at least let thy care and carriage be such as may convince or condemn them. Remember, where the wicked are, there Satan is, as it were, incarnate; they are his visible pictures, his children, his limbs; therefore when ever thou fallest into their company, consider, the tempter is now before thee, the gin is laid, the net



is spread. Now look to thy feet, to thy words, to thy affections, Satan will have a fling at thee, openly or secretly, by a gentle thrust, or a down-right blow, one way or other, if possible, he will smite. Look to thy self, and see there be no part of thy Christian armor wanting or loose; that thou mayest not only be able to defend thy self, but ready on all occasions to manifest the vertue and power of that spirit wherewith thou art endowed from above, that by thy heavenly discourse, thy friendly and pleasant carriage, thy faithful dealing and plain-heartedness, thy love, meekness, and humility, thou mayest deliver them from their prejudice against the ways of God. But yet this is not all, there is the communion of Saints too, the society of Christian brethren: And to what unspeakable advantage might this priviledge be improved, were we but as wise, as spiritual, and as humble as we should be? Were we most desirous of the best gifts, and more communicative of what we have received, how plentifully might every member in the mystical Body be supplied, both with grace and comfort from the fulness of the Head? Surely one great reason of the decay of Religion, is the carnal conversation and communication of the professors of it with one another; and whence proceeds this, but from the decay of love? of which we shall speak more largely under another *Direction*.

Onely let me here subjoin a few short rules, for the more profitable improvement of thy Christian society. Though there be enough already extant of this nature, by those who have cast off their *abundance* into the common treasury; yet suffer me also to cast in my few *mites*, as your remembrancer.

- I. I. If they be of thine own family, with whom thou hast dayly to do. Remember these rules.
- I. I. *Look upon it as one of thy choicest privileges that God hath placed thee in the midst of thy brethren*, be much in admiring the goodness of God in it, that he hath not set thee as a lilly among thorns, or the most stinking or noysome weeds in the world; but, as it were in his paradise. What might have become of thee, if thou hadst been brought up, or necessitated to live in any of those families, that call not on the name of the Lord, among the haters of God; and deriders of godliness, as is the case of many of Gods dear children? what a damp would it have cast upon thy graces, at least on thy comforts? prize this thy priviledge above all other advantages whatever, that thy lines are fallen to thee in a pleasant place; that God hath not set thee in a barren or howling wilderness, but by the refreshing streams and green pastures; not in a den of thieves, but in a house of prayer.
2. 2. *Take heed that thou be not as a dry and fruitless*

*leß branch among them.* Be always forward and ready to every duty, religious and civil, whereunto thou shalt be called, either as a Christian, or as a particular member of the family, whatever thy relation in it be, superiour, inferiour, or equal, whether thou be an essential, integral, or accidental part of it.

3. *Next to holiness, set thy self to promote the interest of peace and love with one another.*

Nay, without peace, you are never like to do much for holiness. To this end you must resolve to hear one anothers burdens; prudently and compassionately weighing one anothers tempers and temptations. This rule you may never hope to practise, till you have learn'd to lay aside these four things, pride, covetousness, passion and prejudice, and cloath your selves with love and humility.

4. *Be faithful in reprovng one another for what is evil.* But be sure you do it lovingly, seriously, seasonably, humbly and at first privately; if you fail in either of these, a thousand to one, but you do more harm than good. But of this more in another place.

5. *Every day before thou sleep, call thy self to an account.* Concerning what good thou hast gotten by them, or done for them, and wherein, and through what occasions thou hast failed in either. Penitently confess thy failures to thy heavenly father, and resolve in his strength to redeem thy losses, and double thy diligence the next day.

2. 2. If they are such as live at a distance from thee, observe

1. 1. *Whenever thou meetest with them look on them as thy brethren.* As fellow-travellers, fellow-souldiers, co-heirs, and fellow-members of the same body with thee; and let this endear them to thee.

2. 2. *Prize them according as thou seest the image of God in them.* Take heed that neither self-respects, nor vain glory, be the ground of thy affection to them.

3. 3. *The more thou findest of the fulness of God in them, the more do thou lament thy own emptiness, and the more earnestly do thou covet to fill thy self by them.*

4. 4. *Improve the time thou hast with them, as much as possible, for the mutual good of one anothers souls.* Let it not be spent in silence, nor in worldly, impertinent, or idle talk. As the children of this world will be speaking and acting that which they have seen with their father; so be you, when ever you come together, speaking that which you have seen with your father.

John 8. 38.

5. 5. *Spend not your zeal in ripping up the faults of others, or enquiring for news of that nature, or exclaiming on persecutors, or such as are of a contrary perswasion.* This is to back-bite, and to foment factions and envy and discord, and proceeds from an evil spirit, and tends to an evil end.

6. Trouble

6. *Trouble not one another with words and questions of little moment, that tend to strife and contention and the forming of errors in the understanding.* Which is the manner of some, who love to be thought to know somewhat more than others; but let your work be to edify one another in love, and in the power of godliness.

7. *Seek for help one of another, and administer help one to another.* Especially in those cases, wherein you are more especially concern'd to comfort and bind up those that are broken, to encourage those that are fearful, to reconcile those that are offended, to recover those that are turning aside, and to acquaint one another with the wiles of Satan, according to your own experiences.

8. *Remember there is one above, that sees and hears all that you do or say, and is privy to all the secrets of your hearts.* Therefore take heed of acting your parts, as on a stage; but let your tongues be true to your hearts, without ostentation or dissimulation.

9. *When you leave your company, consider what you have gotten, and lay it up as a treasure by you, and bless God for it, and consider what you have fail'd in and be humbled.* Sirs! let me tell you, our barrenness and bitterness in this respect is not the least of those sins, that threaten us with the ax to cut us down.

11. *What you have lost from the pulpit, labour*



*hour to redeem again from the press.* Blessed be God, that both these wells of salvation are in any measure yet open. Oh! how wonderfully hath mercy provided for an unthankful generation? what age or people ever abounded with such and so many of the useful and precious labours of the servants of Christ, as we have done? To repair the unfaithfulness and leakiness of our ears, God hath set his truths before our eyes, not only in his own written word, but in those many famous treatises on all the parts of Divinity, both dogmatical and practical, for the explication and application of all the sacred mysteries of godliness. And for your caution herein, take with you these two rules.

- I. *1. Let not your good books lie idle by you.* I doubt this is a sin that will lie heavy one day on the account of some of *England's* Professors. Is it not a lamentable case, that so many of the eminent servants of Christ, that take it as their honour and pleasure, to spend and to be spent for you, should exhaust their time and strength to fill your hands with this plenty, that it might be the surviving monument of their love and care for you, and yet to be serv'd in this as in the word that perishes between their lips and their hearers ears, as if they had nothing else to do with their tongues or pens, but to beat the air? Sirs! the time may come before you go out of this world, that you may wish

wish you had better improved this price, while you had it in your hands, or else be forc'd to it, for want of those other helps which you yet enjoy. The Apostle tells the rich man, *James* 5. 2, 3. that the *moth* and the *canker* and the *rust* of their hoarded goods shall witness against them, for not improving of what they did enjoy: and shall not the *dust* of your neglected books arise as witnesses too? The hiding of the talent was enough to condemn the unprofitable servant, though he were accused of no other abuse of it, *Matth.* 25. 24, &c.

2. *Let them not be idoliz'd by you.* Turn 2. not these antidotes into poison, neither by a partial, nor carnal admiring of them for their learning or language, or the outward garb or dress wherein they commend themselves to men, or for the persons sake from whom they proceed, nor by a sinful resting in them; pining an implicit faith on them, and ascribing that authority to them, which is due only to the sacred oracles of canonical Scripture, as the manner of too many is. I verily believe that one great reason of the continuation of those breaches and divisions that are amongst us in matters of Religion, is this; Those that are once profelyted to a party, account no book safe or worth their reading, but those of their own Teachers, unless it be on those common practical truths, that touch not on the matters of difference; and yet are ready to ac-

count themselves competent judges, and sufficiently instructed, when they have heard but one party speak. And if they meet with any thing that contradicts their tenents, either they fling it away as a dangerous book (though I confess it may be dangerous enough in some cases, and for some persons) or modestly, and yet proudly, impute it to the Author's weakness, and over-look the arguments that are urged to convince them; as if it were a crime to mistrust their own mistakes, and their duty to sin against their own reason, and to shut their eyes against that light, which would discover their own folly. Let no man ever hope to understand the truth, or rightly to judge in controverted points, till he lay aside all prejudice, arising either from interest, credit, or party, or any other way. When once men are come to make their books, or the Authors of them their idols, they are going head-long apace to whatever degrees of apostasie the Devil and their own lusts shall entice them. Alas Sirs! the best and wisest of men are but reeds shaken with the wind; if you lean too hard on them, they will pierce your hands, or break under you. Yea, how fair a light soever the brightest and purest of them may give in their several orbs, 'tis but like that of the moon and stars, a borrowed light: Give God the glory then, unto whom it doth originally belong, and do not rob him of his jewel, to adorn your idols,

idols. But to this purpose already in a former Treatise.

12. *Take heed how, what, and whom you bear.* Dir. 12. As Faith comes by hearing, so sometimes doth apostasie from the faith too. Wherefore

1. *Take heed how you hear.* And for your better instruction herein, I had need to speak to these three things. I.

Preparation to hearing.

Duties in hearing.

Duties after hearing.

1. *The preparation to your duty.* I intend not to be large here, there being so many already extant, whom I could refer you to on this subject, and whom I dare not think of comparing with. But in order to this preparation there must be *Good Counsel* I.

1. *A holy sequestration of the heart from all worldly thoughts and affections, and from all sinful delights and pollutions.* Thou must not *miscere sacra profanis*, mingle sacred things with profane. Thou hast to do with a God that will be sanctified of all that come nigh him. *Sanctifie your selves and come with me to the sacrifice.* Whatever business you go about at any time in the course of your worldly affairs, you have your preparations according to the nature, circumstances, and importance of it. Your worldly purposes and designs have their worldly preparations; your care is to fit your selves I.

*Lev. 10. 3.  
1. Sam. 16. 5.*

selves for the work you take in hand. If you are but to meddle with clean-wash'd cloaths, or to put your hands to the meat you are providing for your bellies, you will first wash them, and see that they be clean. If you are bound for a market or fair, you will provide your selves either with ware or money, to exchange there for your advantage. Are you to visit some great person, or to partake of a rich feast, you will see that all be as handsome and trim about your bodies, as you can make it. Who goes to work but carries his tools with him? The beggar will not go forth without his bag to bring home his alms in. And should not spiritual works have their spiritual preparation? The *Jews* had before their Sabbaths their *ᾠδὸς* and *προᾠδὸς* *Preparation* and *Forepreparation*. The very heathens would not sacrifice to some of their idols, without the preparation of a *Cæna pura*, a supper held with religious rites and devotion over night, at which time they were said to be *in casto* in order to their more solemn services. Shall stocks and stones be honored with such reverence, and shall the living God be approach'd unto as if he were our fellow? Nor is it enough to make thy usual bodily preparations, by attiring thy carkase, wherein too many indeed, to the shame of their profession, manifest more of vanity and pride, than of decency or modesty. Alas! is this like to com-



commend thee to that God, who will be worshipped with reverence and godly fear? As circumcision is that of the heart, so is preparation. *Thou wilt prepare their heart, thou wilt cause thine ear to hear*, Psal. 10. 17. According to thy preparation, is like to be thy success. Thou wilt not sow thy field, till thou hast prepared it, and findest it capable of answering thine expectations. And must not the fallow ground of thy heart be broken up, that thou mayest not sow among thorns? God will send in his plough before his seeds-man, and first tear up those bryars and thorns of worldly thoughts and affections, before the precious seed of his word shall be cast in with a blessing. This is that (as one says) that God intended to teach by that ceremony he commanded *Moses* to use, *Exod. 3. 5. Put off thy shoes from off thy feet; for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground.* Doubtless this is one common reason of peoples unprofitable hearing, their hearts are like the inn at *Beth-lehem*, so thronged with other guests, that there is no room for Christ. Well then! as ever thou hopest to hear with acceptance or advantage, deal with all those vain, worldly, or impertinent thoughts, as *Abraham* with the fowls that came down upon the carcase of his sacrifice; *he drove them away.* And if the world must be thus laid aside, much more must sin. 'Tis a dreadful place which you have,

Ezek.

*Jer. 4. 3.*

*Hilderth.  
on Psal. 51.  
Page 31.*

*Luke 2. 7.*

*Gen. 15. 11.*

Ezek. 14. 7, 8. *For every one of the house of Israel, or of the stranger that sojourneth in Israel, which separateth himself from me, and setteth up his idols in his heart, and putteth the stumbling-block of his iniquity before his face, and cometh to a prophet to enquire of him concerning me; I the Lord will answer him by my self. And I will set my face against that man, and will make him a sign and a proverb, and I will cut him off from the midst of my people, and ye shall know that I am the Lord. How canst thou expect a blessing, when thou comest to mock thy maker to his face? Wherefore laying aside all malice and all guile and hypocrisies, and envies, and evil speakings: as new-born babes desire the sincere milk of the word that ye may grow thereby,* 1 Pet. 2. 1, 2. Remember thou hast to do with a God that is *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity.* 'Tis true, we cannot come without sin; but 'tis one thing to come mourning under the burden, another thing to allow or delight in it. 'Tis not only he that is laden, but he that laboureth and is weary of his burden that hath the promise of rest, *Mat. 11. 28. But if I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me,* Psal. 66. 18. All other preparations be in vain, unless the heart be prepared.

2. *There must be an inclining of the ear and heart.* A readiness to hear, and a resolution to obey. *Incline your ear and come unto me, hear and*

and your soul shall live, Isa. 55. 3. Thou must resign up thy self body and soul to the power and authority of the word; and that not from any carnal respects to the messenger, but in due reverence and honor to the author of it.

*Speak, said Samuel, for thy servant heareth.* 1 Sam. 3. 10.

Let me but know thy will and I will obey: all other Lords and laws shall give place and stoop to thee. Lord turn in unto thy servant, though unworthy that thou shouldest come under my roof; please thy self in me.

Whatever I am or have, if there be any thing to be found, that mercy may accept, I most humbly and freely offer to thee. Here are the necks of all my lusts on the block before thee; now draw out thy sword and smite them at once, as *Fael* smote *Sisera*.

This rebellious heart, this stubborn will, these sensual and unconstant affections, I have brought thee, like *Benbadads* servants, with ropes on their heads; now make an everlasting covenant with them, and bind them to thine own terms. When a soul comes thus prepared, then may she comfortably expect to meet with God in his word.

3. *There must be humble and earnest supplication.* Seeing the blessing of ordinances doth not depend on any vertue or power in themselves, or in him that administers them; but onely on the free grace of God, it is but reasonable that he should be sought unto. *Open*

*thou*

*thou mine eyes* (says David) *that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law*, *Psal. 119. 18.* Lord open mine eyes, and then I shall see. Speak an *Ephata* to mine ears, and then I shall hear. Till God open the windows of the soul, we are both blind and deaf. Remember, *The preparation of the heart in man, and the answer of the tongue are from the Lord, Pro. 16. 1.* Go to him then, and spread thy case before him; tell him thou darest not neglect thy duty; and yet canst not, without sin, perform it. Make thy complaint to him, and beg assistance of him; urge him with his own arguments. He hath called thee, therefore art thou come; he hath promised thus and thus, and on his word hath caused thee to hope: cast thy self at his feet, with a resolution not to be answered without a blessing. Sirs! the hearers have as much need of, and therefore as much reason to beg this assistance, as the speaker. But alas! how few are there that understand this?

2. 2. The duties in hearing are such as these.
1. 1. *Take every word as at the mouth of God, and not of man.* We may here take up the acclamation of the *Tyrians* and *Sidonians*, and that without blasphemy or flattery, *Act. 12. 22.* *It is the voice of God and not of man.* Only take heed of idolizing the instrument. Be not like *Ezekiel's* hearers, *Ezek. 33. 32.* *And lo! thou art unto them as a very lovely song of*

one that hath a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear thy words, but they do them not. 'Tis a miserable and almost incurable disease, among the professors of this age, to place their devotion, and too much of their religion, in admiring the persons and parts of such ministers, as they affect. Commendation of the teacher (and that with ignorance and partiality enough) is the greatest fruit of sabbaths and sermons, that is to be found on too many, who would fain be accounted zealous. But see that thou look beyond the instrument, and fixe thine eye on the author. Receive the word, not onely, as the stony-ground hearers, with a little present affection, but in the full authority, majesty and power of it. The word of God is not onely *ὁράσασθαι* a *looking-glass*, wherein a soul, by reflection, may see it self; but *ὁρατὶς* a *perspective*, through which it may see him that is invisible. There are the *vestigia & magnalia Dei*, the sacred characters; and divine impresses of his heavenly goodness, wisdom and greatness to be seen in and thorow it. This is the great ordinance, which God hath instituted in his church, for the begetting, quickning and confirming of faith; for the bringing in and building up of souls in Christ. Here are these golden candlesticks, among which he is wont to walk; the garden of nuts and pomegranates, where the *spouse* meets with her  
Cc beloved,



*beloved*, and receives the endearing pledges of his love. Till thou come to see through this glass the transcendent, ravishing, spiritual glory of God, thou art never like to be transform'd into the same image. Remember what Christ says, *He that heareth you heareth me, and he that despiseth you despiseth me, and he that despiseth me, despiseth him that sent me, Luk. 10. 16.* Were it but the word of man, it were no great wonder, nay, no great matter if it were despised; but alas! what are we, the ministers of Christ, but the trumpets, through which the Lord of heaven and earth is pleased to speak to his rational creatures here in this lower world? 'tis true the voice comes immediately to your ears from us; but the mouth that first speaks is above. *We have this treasure in earthen vessels, 2 Cor 4. 7.* The vessel indeed is earthly, but the treasure is heavenly. Till you learn thus to hear, you are not like to receive the word in the convincing evidence of it; nor will it make any more impression, than a serpent on a stone. Say then within thyself, when ever thou comest to hear, I am now before my great judge, whom these very eyes shall shortly see, cloathed with such glory, as would now kill me to look upon. I am now hearing that very word, which in these few days more, will either save or damn me. This congregation, this minister must shortly be call'd forth to witness either for or against me.

Oh!

Oh ! with what reverence and godly fear should I now possess my soul ! *If they escaped not, who refused him that spake on earth (viz. Moses) much less shall I escape, if I turn away from him that speaketh from heaven, Heb. 12. 25.*

2. *Mix the word with faith.* The great reason why it hath prov'd so fruitless in the world is for want of this. *The word preached did not profit them, being not mixed with faith in them that heard it, Heb. 4. 2.* The unbelieving hearer is an unprofitable hearer ; the word reaches no farther than his ear, and dies there. *Who hath believed our report, and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? Isa. 53. 2.* 'Tis true, there is a faith which is commonly mixt with the word ; but it is such a faith as St. James speaks of, *James 2. 19. Thou believest that there is one God, thou doest well, the devils also believe and tremble. There is assensus axiomaticus,* a dogmatical or historical faith ; but this is but half faith, an act of the understanding only, and that but languid and ineffectual, terminating it self in the truth revealed, or promise made, as its *objectum formale*; thus the Devils believe and know to their sorrow, that every truth and every promise, yea, every word in Scripture is of infallible verity ; and thus may his children believe too. But alas, this bare illumination is far enough from that faith which justifieth, and therefore improperly

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John 6. 44.  
John 1. 12.  
Acts 8. 37.

perly called faith: there must be consent, as well as assent, which is terminated on the person of Christ, as its object; on the promise, as its warrant. And this the Scripture calls a coming to Christ, and a receiving of him, a believing with all the heart. 'Tis the work of the whole soul; its humble and hearty closing with Christ on his own terms, and to all ends and purposes. This is the faith which waters the word with a blessing, and makes it fruitful; that opens the inner doors of the heart, to receive it in the love of it, apprehending it not only as true, but as good. This is the faith which makes the word to be more desired than

*Psalm 19. 10. gold, yea than much fine gold, sweeter also than the honey and the honey-comb.* See then that thou have such a faith to mix with the word, which may so apply and appropriate it to thee, as that it may be thy *viaticum*, the staff of thy pilgrimage, that it may be a present help at every turn.

3.

3. *Treasure up the word in thine heart. Thy word have I hid in my heart, that I might not sin against thee, Psalm 119. 11.* therefore the good heart is call'd the good treasure, or a good treasury, *Matth. 12. 35.* a good treasure, a jewel of great account in the eyes of God. *The tongue of the just* (which is but the instrument and interpreter of the heart) *is as choice silver, but the heart of the wicked is but little worth, Pro. 10. 20.* a good treasury, and indeed the riches

*Μορμυρὸς*  
*Thesaurus &*  
*The aurum.*

richest cabinet in the world. Here that pearl of price is kept, that white stone, and new name. Here all the jewels of grace are treasure'd up, the least whereof is of more worth than ten thousand worlds. Yea, here God and Christ dwell too. *For ye are the temple of the living God, as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people, 2 Cor. 6. 16.* Can there be a richer treasury than this? be persuaded then to gather for thy self, while yet thou hast a gathering time. Fill thy pot of this heavenly *Manna*; enrich thy store-house with these divine truths, which are able to make thee wise unto salvation. God onely knows what a famine may be approaching. *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, Col. 3. 16.* that when a spending time comes, thou mayst be able to bring out of the good treasure of thy heart things new and old, for the supply and comfort both of thy self and others. Or, however it be, that thou mayest shine as a light in the world, and be useful in thy generation, while thou livest, and when thou shalt come to die, mayest be found like a thirsty and laborious hive, that hath well improv'd the Summer, and is praised in the Autumn: or, as *Eliphaz* speaks, mayest come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season, *Job 5. 26.* Oh, remember the foolish Virgins, *Matthew 25. 1-13.*

How sad was their case; when the Bridegroom was come, and their lamp gone out, their store spent, and too late for ever to recover that which was lost. They had had a gathering time, but they knew not the things of their peace in the day of their visitation; they had once a price in their hands, but had no heart to it.

3. 3. The duties after hearing. Remember

I. I. *To entertain the word with joy.* Bid Christ welcome into thy soul, on what errand soever he come to thee. Whither to reprove, convict, correct, or else to heal and bind up. Bid him welcome, though he come, as the Apostle once threatned the *Corinthians*, with a rod. Though he cloath himself with terror, and fasten his arrows on thee, as once on Peter's hearers. *They were pricked at the heart.* Indeed it is said of the stony-ground hearers, that *anon* or forthwith, *they received it with joy*; like an itching scab, while it is rubb'd or scratch'd, there is a kind of pleasure; but afterward it smarts and frets. They received it with joy; so far they were right, and in a hopeful way: but alas these joys were but a fit of some faint affections, or disquieted conscience, no rooted delight, nor hearty complacency in it. *Yet hath he not root in himself, but dureth for a while* [and but a while] *for when tribulation or persecution ariseth because of the word, by and by he is offended.* So it is said of Herod, *Mark 6. 20.*

1 Cor. 4. 21.

Acts 2. 37.

Matth. 13.  
20. 21.



*He heard John, and did many things, and heard him gladly.* And yet for all this, *verse 27.* he sends his executioner to gratifie the lust of a dancing Courtezan and beheads him in the Prison. There are several base and sinister ends, for which the word may sometimes be gladly received, and with a great deal of zeal, and yet with no less hypocrisie. As sometimes to still the clamors of an accusing conscience; sometimes out of a carnal delight in the excellency of speech or learning, or a sinful and partial respect of persons, or in order to some beloved interest, or the like: so that though they receive it with a kind of joy, yet *they receive not the love of the truth that they might be saved,* 2 Theff. 2. 10. This was *Herod's* case; *He heard John gladly,* not for any love he had to the truth, but for fear of his interest; he durst not displease the people, who accounted and honoured *John* as a Prophet. But it was not so with the generality of *Peter's* hearers, Acts 2. 41, 42. *Then they that gladly received his word were baptized, and they continued stedfastly in the Apostles doctrine, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.* Well then! when thou hast been, at any time, sitting under the word, begin to commune thus with thine own heart: Who is this that hath been knocking now at my unworthy doors? Is it not the Lord Jesus? he, who hath paid the price of my redemption, and laid down his own life to save

*Mark 14. 5.*

mine? and shall I not open to him, and bid him welcome? Is not this his voice, which I hear by the mouth of his messenger, and shall I stop my ears at him? and cause his servant to shake off the dust of his feet against me? How then shall I be able to look him in the face, when shortly I shall see him on the throne in judgment? How often hath he already knocked? how long hath he waited? how lovingly, how loudly hath he called? how affectionately hath he begg'd, Sabbath after Sabbath, and what to do? surely not to be enrich'd by me, but to enrich me. He is not come to fetch from me, (unless it be my rags and misery) but to bestow on me, and that both grace and glory. Oh! where art thou my heart, that thou art no more affected? canst thou hear thy pardon read, thy title to an everlasting kingdom sealed, on such easie terms, and not leap for joy? Is the Gospel a faithful saying, and yet not worthy of thy acceptance? Doth the greedy worldling open his arms so wide to embrace his adored Mammon after long adventures! Is the loyal wife so revived at the voice of her loving husband after long absence? And am I only the stupid block, that cannot be affected with the things that most nearly concern me?

2. *Go and meditate on what thou hast heard.* Meditation is, as it were, the digestive faculty, and work of the soul; as the chewing of the cud,

cud, which was one property of those beasts, which God accounted clean to his people; so is this one property of those souls whom he accounts clean to himself. How famous was holy *David* for this? *Psal. 119. 15. I will meditate in thy precepts.* This also was the blessed Virgin-mothers practice; she kept those things which she had heard of Christ, and pondered them in her heart, *Luke 2. 19. & 51.* This will both argue thy love, and increase thy love to the word. *O how I love thy law, it is my meditation all the day, Psal. 119. 97.* It will make the word sweet to thee, and raise in thee an holy appetite to it, *Psal. 119. 15, 16. I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways. I will delight my self in thy statutes, I will not forget thy word.* It will wonderfully increase thy knowledge and understanding in it. *Psal. 119. 99. I have more understanding than all my teachers, for thy testimonies are my meditation.* It will produce the fruits of obedience to the word, *Joshua 1. 8. Thou shalt meditate in the law day and night, that thou mayest observe to do all that is written therein.* 'Tis true, there are some that meditate, but it is to little purpose, that meditate only on the better of what they hear or read, the excellency of words, or neatness of expression; or only on the theory or notions of it, content themselves barely to know or talk of it, or to instruct or reprove others; or that they may

be admired and accounted excellent in the knowledge of Gospel-mysteries. Others improve their meditations to bad purpose, for strife and contention, that they may censure and accuse, or cavil and brabble with their Teachers, or with one another, or strengthen themselves in their own errors, and ensnare the weak. These meditations are from beneath, not from above. This is not the practice of that blessed man, that *David* describes, Psalm 1. 2. *His delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.* Observe, 'tis in the *Law* of God that he meditates.

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lege, eo quod  
recte doceat.  
Byth.

The *Law* indeed is sometimes taken for the whole word, or revealed will of God; but properly the *Law* signifies the *preceptive part*, wherein the great work and interest of a Christian lies, and should be the chief subject of his meditation, that he may know his duty, and how to walk to all well-pleasing. As for matter of higher speculation, which are in dispute among the learned, or matters less necessary unto salvation; it is not his work to busie his thoughts about. Learn then, my brethren, to make a practical improvement of all that you hear and know. Let not notions lie idle, but reduce them unto action. And this leads me to the next thing, which is the end of hearing and meditation and all.

3. *Yield up thy self in obedience to the word.* Unless thou do this, thou doest nothing. But who

who so looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed, James 1. 25. Sirs! 'tis obedience that God looks for; to hear and to remember, and not to do, is to forget, because the main end of hearing is forgotten, which is obedience. *Hath the Lord as great delight in burnt-offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? behold to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams,* as Samuel once told Saul, 1 Sam. 15. 22. Offerings and Sacrifices were indeed of God's own appointment; but he had required other things of Saul then; therefore were all his sacrifices an abomination. All the religious shews, or external acts of devotion in the world, will never compensate the defect of obedience; for God seeth not as man seeth. It were not the fair leaves that could protect the barren Fig-tree, when 'twas fruit that was expected.

4. *Be often, as occasion is offered, communicating what thou hearest to others.* This will keep the word alive, and imprint it the deeper both on thy self and others. Silence after hearing is a sign that the heart was not much affected in hearing, and is the way to bury it in the grave of oblivion. Oh be not the bed-men, but the factors of the word, to spread and propagate it unto others. *Ye shall lay up these my words in your heart, and in your soul.--- And*



ye shall teach them your children, speaking of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up, Deut. 11. 18, 19. But thus far for the manner how you ought to hear.

2. *Take heed when you hear.* I profess not to attempt the decision of the great question of times; nor dare I meddle with the *Gantler*, while there are so many cholerick *Fencers* engaged at *Sharps* on the *Stage*. Yet that I may not be unfaithful to the truth, I shall in meekness and sobriety offer what at present I conceive necessary and expedient, and leave it for those, who are better able to judge.

In general then, you may know, that where God finds a mouth to speak, we ought to find an ear to hear; or, that those whom Christ sends to teach, you may and must hearken to. But you may say, we are now as wise as we were before. How shall we know who those are whom Christ sends to teach us? Wherefore I shall shew you plainly and faithfully (though I expect not to be believ'd by all) who they are whom you may warrantably hear as sent of Christ, and that

- I. 1. *Negatively*, in these three things.
- I. 1. *Every one that hath but confidence enough to presume on this sacred office, or that undertakes to speak, as being sent of Christ so to do, is not indeed so sent; nor may you prostitute your ears*

to every such preacher. Christ gives it as a character of his sheep. *John 10. 5. A stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him; for they know not the voice of strangers.* Every one that comes in the name of a shepherd, is not therefore a shepherd, or the shepherds friend. We seem to be cast on such times as Christ once foretold, *Matth. 24. 23, 24.* wherein men are crying up, *Loe, here is Christ, and loe, he is there.* How many are there, that (like *Abimaaaz*.) will needs run, though they have neither instructions to furnish them, nor commission to authorize them? The Apostle gives them their character, *Judges 12. 13. Clouds they are without water, carried about of winds; trees whose fruit withereth, without fruit twice dead, plucked up by the roots. Raging waves of the sea, foaming out their own shame; wandering stars, to whom is reserved the blackness of darkness for ever.* The Devils factors, the fomenters of Schism, blasphemous incendiaries, subverters both of the doctrine and discipline, and traitors to the crown and scepter of our Lord Jesus Christ. *These are they, who [causelessly] separate themselves, sensual, having not the spirit,* ver. 19. Common sense and reason tells us, that such as are neither gifted nor authorized, must needs be bold and impudent usurpers, in meddling with such an office. Nor is it enough that the persons themselves, or a few brain-sick people that are bewitch'd to them,

them, do applaud them and account them to be sufficiently qualified: For what Heretick, or Schismatick (though never so blind or ignorant) was there ever in the world, but was admir'd by himself and his own party? I doubt not, but that this will be granted by all, at least in *thesis*, that every one is not to be heard, who hath but confidence enough to preach; else we must unavoidably set open the doors to all that licentious confusion and contempt, that the gates of hell shall pour in upon the Church of Christ.

*Object.*

But, may some say, those whom we hear are choice holy men, endued with the rare gifts of the spirit, famous for their humility and self-denial. They preach not for hire, as others do; utter enemies to Antichrist, and such as design the advancement of Christ's spiritual kingdom, &c.

*Ans. 1.*

1. The Apostle tells us, 2 Cor. 11. 13, 14, 15. that in his days there were *false Apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the Apostles of Christ: And no marvel, for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light: therefore it is no great thing if his ministers also be transformed as the ministers of righteousness, whose end shall be according to their works.* Every one that preacheth up holiness is not a promoter of holiness. 'Twas holiness that Corab and his accomplices pleaded, Numb. 16. 3. but 'twas *sebisim* and *sedition* that they

they practised. 'Tis sad to see how the Devil, by the high pretense of *holiness*, hath enervated the power of *godliness*. It hath ever been a usual thing for the grossest of hereticks, and busiest schismaticks, yea, and vilest idolaters to blendish their doctrines and doings with the cry of *holiness* and *devotion*, by which means the Devil hath found it an easie matter to ensnare those that are simple. Is this *holiness* for men to deride the holy Scriptures, and to deny their authority, verity, or sufficiency? Is it *holiness* to malign and vilifie the messengers of Christ? to sow the tares of faction and envy? to scorn and cast off that yoke of Gospel-discipline and order which Christ and his Apostles have established? Is it *holiness* that teaches men to contemn and prophane the Lords day? to deny the principles of the doctrine of Christ, and to abandon the common duties both of Christianity and civility? *Ab ista sanctitate, libera me Domine.* If this be *holiness*, I will never desire to be sanctified.

2. But are they endued with such rare gifts of the Spirit? who shall be judge? Our Saviour tells us, *Wisdom is justified of her children*, Matth. 11. 19. Shall I be tried by my horse whether my syllogism be true, or my argument probable? Or shall a thief be tried by his fellow, whether he be an honest man? Shall every idiote, that is but able to make a clattering on a kittle-drum, be cried up for an

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an artist, and magnified for his war-like skill and activity, because of the foolish acclamations of a company of silly children, that flock after him in the streets? The Apostle tells us, *1 Cor. 14. 32. The spirits of the prophets are subject to the prophets.* Should they not be some of the wisest and gravest men, that are sent forth to judge and determine, in matters that concern mens estates or lives? and yet are a rabble of illiterate silly women, or self-conceited, unexperienced, rash youths, or a few old dotards, or a company of prejudic'd, designing, discontented spirits, to be thought competent judges in the matters of Christ's kingdom, and of mens souls? Of whom we may say as the Apostle, *1 Tim. 1. 7.---Understanding neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm.* But what are those rare gifts thou so admirest? are they such as were bestowed on the Primitive Christians of old? Then let them produce their miracles, and shew us their wonder-working power. Are they the gifts of sanctifying grace? Let them act then within their own sphere; and see to it, that they mistake not counters for gold. Are they ministerial gifts? let them be proved then, by such as are able, and authoriz'd to judge, that they may be approv'd. But, alas! it is too apparent, that that which the silly herd of unstable souls are apt to cry up for rare and incomparable gifts of the spirit, is little else than the gift



gift of non-sence, the gift of impudence, the gift of reviling, the gift of dissembling, &c. And from what spirit these gifts proceed may easily be seen, by the image and superscription that they bear.

3. Are they so famous for their humility and self-denial: wherein doth this appear? Is it in their demure and pensive looks and gestures? This was the humility of *Cain*, for of the *Pharisei Mortarii*. Is it in the plainness of their apparel, or smoothness of their words? This is but the humility of an heathen *Dio-genes*, or Popish *Mendicant*, and such as the Apostle speaks of, *Col. 2. 18. 8. 23*. Who knows not what damnable inward pride may lie under these external shews of humility: The Devil will not stick to crouch and cringe for the promotion of his own interest. But doth it appear in this, that they preach not for hire? but as freely they have received, so they freely give? This would require a larger answer, than I shall now give thee. But,

1. Those that make their hire the principal motive of taking up, or acting in so sacred a function, as if the curse of *El's* house were upon them, to crouch for a piece of silver, and sue for the office on no higher design, but that they may get a livelihood, or fill their bellies or their purses, or on any other grounds of the like sordid nature, shall never be pleaded for, nor excused by me.

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2. Let

2. 2. Let those that upbraid us with the matter of hire, consider whom they speak against: from what principle it proceeds, and what the consequences will be.

I. 1. *Whom they speak against.* Surely not only us, but our Lord and Master that hath sent us, *Luke 10. 16.* who hath told us that *the labourer is worthy of his hire*, ver. 7. and hath both allowed and ordained, that those which minister about holy things, should live of the things of the Temple, and they that preach the Gospel should live of the Gospel, *1 Cor. 9. 12, 14.* This is the ground of the quarrel, that the tribe of *Levi* should have their portion out of the other tribes. If we could turn *Camelions* and live on the air, our doctrine would not be so offensive to many as now it is. But let them not blame us, that God hath given us such bodies as cannot subsist without daily bread; nor that he hath appointed us our maintenance to be from those whom we teach. This is not our doing but God's.

2. 2. *From what principle it proceeds.* Indeed those that are most guilty are wont to be most blind, and incapable of discerning what spirit they are acted by. For had not the Devil (through God's judicial permission) the power of blinding mens eyes, and casting a veil over their hearts, and to shew them their faces (as it were) in false glasses, he would never be able to hold his kingdom in so much peace.

And

And seeing it is so, how can I expect to be believed by those of whom I am now speaking? Yet out of compassion to their souls, I can do no less than advise them to consider, whether it proceed not, either from a principle of envy and ill-will, because we are not of their persuasion and way, or from a principle of discontent; because others seem to be more regarded or favoured than they? or a principle of covetousness to keep what they have? or of spiritual pride, accounting themselves as well able to teach as the best, and yet cannot live so idly, as they account others do, who apply themselves wholly to their studies? or from a factious design of advancing themselves on the reproaches and ruines of others? I think they have reason to consider, and to beg of God to shew them, whether such things as these lie not at the bottom.

3. *What the consequences must needs be.* 1. It is to banish the Gospel, and to turn Christ out of doors; or, with the Jews, to cast him out of the Vineyard, and to kill him, or bid him go beg his bread. 2. It will inevitably overturn the very foundations of the Church of Christ in the earth, both as to the Doctrine and Discipline of it, and fill the house of God with confusion. 3. It will in a short time wipe out the very remembrance of God from among men. 4. Religion being become the grand interest of states and kingdoms; this would

be the most effectual course to turn the most flourishing state in the world into a *chaos*, or an *Aceldama*. The dependance of these and other like consequences is so clear, that I think I need no more than name them to any, that have but the least grain of sober reason left them.

But will you say that *Paul* wrought with his hands that he might not be chargeable? I grant it, and remember that he mentions it about four times. To those at *Miletus*, *Acts* 20. 34. to the *Thessalonians* in both Epistles, *1 Thes.* 2. 9. *2 Thes.* 3. 8. and also to the *Corinthians*, *1 Cor.* 4. 12. But what then? 1. He was bred to a trade before his conversion, and therefore knew the better how to use it in his extremity; but so were few of us bred: nor ought any to be so bred, who intend the work of the Ministry. 2. He did not constantly labour with his hands; but when the ingratitude or evil disposition, or else the poverty and low estate of the people, among whom he had preached, necessitated him so to do; for his ordinary supplies were from the people. 3. He intended not by this example to abrogate or abridge the maintenance of the Gospel-ministry, as he speaks plainly enough, *2 Thes.* 3. 9. *Not because we have not power; but as a medium,* which *pro tempore*, he thought good to use with some kind of people, for the better promotion of the great ends of his ministry. 4. He





wherewith he had made the nations of the earth drunk, and saw so many stomachs, as it were to turn against it, he presently prepared a more sprightly intoxicating liquor; so that what he could not do by the one extreme, he might do by the other. I could give instances enough of this, both ancient and modern; but that the case is too evident, and I am willing to hasten.

2. 2. It would be a happy thing if men understood what spirit it is that they are acted by; and that both internally and externally.
  1. *Internally.* Were pride, ignorance, envy, partiality and self-seeking as easie to be seen and hated in ones self, as in others; oh what peace would it make among men? what glory in the Church? and what destruction to the kingdom of Satan? But mens fondness of themselves is that which blindeth their eyes; nay, so far, that some are not ashamed to boast of perfection, as being without sin. And while it is so, how securely doth the Devil act them? and fortifie them against all attempts of reclaiming them.
  2. *Externally.* I doubt not but that many of those silly souls, that are entangled in this snare, are such as are in their hearts enemies to the *Roman* Antichrist; but, alas! they understand not what the tendency of their own doctrine and practice is, nor whose designing Agents those were that first sowed, and are still fomenting those tares in them.

them. And yet several of their Teachers, or gifted Brethren, whom they so magnifie, have been known, and confess'd themselves to be men in *Orders*, belonging to such and such Popish *Fraternities* beyond the Seas, but here negotiating in the form of Trades-men, Butchers, Taylors, Shoe-makers, Grooms, &c. dissembling their learning, and boasting of a Light within them. Oh that ever *England's* Professors! Oh that ever rational creatures should be thus infatuated!

3. Their Doctrine manifests what enemies they are to that Antichrist, which in words they so despise. The Papists call the Reformed Churches Antichristian and Hereticks, and therefore separate from us; so do these. The Papists vilifie the Scriptures as an insufficient rule, super-adding their own decretals and traditions; so do these, opposing their own corrupt interpretations, and the ridiculous, irreligious and blasphemous dictates of the pretended light within them, against the clearest sense and light of Scripture. The Papists make little account of the Lords day; so do these. They boast of an infallibility in their Popes, and these of a perfection they have attained unto, which seems to be somewhat more. We might parallel them at large, but that it is out of my way at present. There is no intelligent impartial eye, but may easily perceive whose design these men are (if not by

every one intentionally, yet eventually) promoting.

*Obj.* But those whom we hear are such as preach the truth, and firmly prove it from Scripture.

*Ans.* 1. *Ans.* 1. It may be that through ignorance or partiality, thou mayest be no competent judge in this matter.

2. 2. Possibly they may alledge Scripture, and yet far enough from the truth for all that. The Devil could quote Scripture too, *Matth.* 4. 6. and yet is *the father of lies*. Some of the grossest hereticks in the world are full of Scripture to blench their doctrines, but it is Scripture abused, mis-interpreted, or mis-applied.

3. 3. Doubtless they may speak a great deal of truth, and yet the poison of their errors or heresies may be subtilly mixt with it. Poison is not wont to be given simply, but in composition with some wholesome liquor or meat, that it may be the less suspected, and the more freely taken. Even in that stinking dunghil of *Mahomet's* Alcoran, there are some jewels of Scripture truth. *Et partem veri fabula quæritur.*

4. 4. Suppose it be the truth that they preach, this is not enough to justify their preaching, nor thy hearing, *Luke* 4. 41. There the Devils preach'd the Gospel, and proclaimed Christ to be the *Messiah*, the Son of God, but Christ would not give the Devil audience,

nor

nor suffer him to bear witness of him; because he needed no such preachers, and knew that he abused the truth to base ends; or however, he had never sent him to preach it. So *Acts 16. 17.* the Devil seems to take the Apostles part. *These men are the servants of the most high God, which shew unto us the way of salvation.* Thus the foul spirit dissembled, out of a slavish fear of being detected and ejected: but this would not serve the turn; the Apostles quickly stopt his mouth, and cast him out. 'Tis not enough for a man to preach the truth, but he must do it to right ends, and must have a call so to do: of which more by and by.

*Obj.* But they have the seals of their Ministry, the Spirit of God hath visibly own'd them, and made the word effectual in their hands.

*Ans. 1.* As it is a most foul and dangerous kind of blasphemy to ascribe the works of the Spirit of God to the Devil: so it is a sin not much more excusable to ascribe the works of the Devil to the holy Spirit of God. Take heed you do not mistake *perverting* for *converting*, as many do. 'Tis one thing to be converted to a *Faction*; but another thing to be converted to the *Faith*. I can make but little account of this argument, while I find this proud, censorious, foolish humor so generally rooted in the hearts of men, as to account few or none truly converted, but those that are converted to their own party.

2. Sup-

2. 2. Suppose they be instruments of real conversion, sometimes; yet this will not justify them. The Devil himself may be an instrument of converting souls to God, that is, *eventually*, though not *intentionally*. Nay, I do not question, but that God doth many times out-shoot him in his own bow, and by the foulness of his temptations, and the sins he draws souls into, occasions their hearty turning unto God, though indeed he may in this case, more properly be called the *occasion*, than the *instrument* of their conversion. But yet suppose that they may be *intentionally* the instruments of converting some souls to God; neither their good intentions, nor good success will warrant their evil action. An usurping Tyrant may be an instrument of peace to a Nation, and perform acts of rare valour, and moral vertue, and in some respects do a great deal of good; yet this will not justify his usurpation, nor salve that mischief he doth by it in other respects. God may honour his word, and manifest the power and efficacy of it in the hand of an intruder, yet is far enough from approving the irregularity of his way. And besides, the Converts which are gotten this way are usually but odd and monstrous kind of creatures, form'd on their own crooked *last*; or like the leprous children begotten in the days of their mothers separation, which ought not to be.



2. *Mere qualifications, though of parts, learning and grace, are not sufficient to constitute a Preacher, nor to warrant your bearing him.* Doubtless *Corah* and his associates were, in themselves, every way as well accomplish'd for the office of the Priesthood, as *Aaron* and his family; yet this would not justify their rebellion, nor protect those that adhered to them. There are often times those in an army among the common souldiers, that can as well, it may be better, discharge the office of a Captain, than he that is in that place; yet if any should presume to counterfeit a Commission, or lay claim to the office, merely on the account of his abilities, he might expect no other than an argument of hemp, to confute his error, and correct his arrogancy.

*Obj.* But God and nature do nothing in vain. Why hath God poured out so plentifully of the gifts of his holy Spirit, and furnish'd them with abilities to teach, if they must not exercise them?

*Ans.* 1. We grant that God and nature do nothing in vain, and that all the gifts that God hath bestowed on men are for exercise: but what then? Is there no use to be made of those gifts, but by preaching in opposition to those, who are both qualified and commissioned so to do? May not these gifts be used, unless they are abused? wherefore hath God bestowed the skill of government on those  
that

that have not the authority to exercise it? Is it to practise rebellion?

2. There is a two-fold preaching, *Authoritative* and *Charitative*. *Authoritative* preaching is when a person performs the work of a Minister, as one that is fitted for, and duly called unto it. But mere qualification, and a desire to it, is not enough to invest any one in this office; for, says the Apostle, *No man taketh this honor unto himself*, [that is, no man ought to take it] *but he that is called of God, as was Aaron*, Heb. 5. 4. *Charitative* preaching is that which is every Christians duty, according to the gift that is bestowed on him, to instruct his family, and to improve all opportunities for the exhorting, quickning, and comforting of one another; of which the Apostle speaks, Heb. 3. 13. *Exhort one another daily, while it is called to day*. And, Eph. 4. 29. *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers*. And as long as there is this use to be made of gifts, God hath not bestowed them in vain.

3. If they are so well qualified for, and have such a design to the work of the Ministry, why do they not enter by the door, but climb up another way, while the door stands open to any, that are found worthy and willing to enter? Let them offer themselves that they

they may be proved and approved, by them who are both able and appointed so to do; that they may receive an investiture into the office, and exercise it regularly. Their refusing of this makes it clear, that 'tis faction they drive at, not edification. *He that doth truth cometh to the light, that his deeds may be made manifest, that they are wrought in God, John 3. 21.*

3. Bare investiture or ordination by man to the office of a Preacher is not sufficient to constitute a person in that office, or make him a Minister of Christ. Though solemn ordination of persons to the work of the Ministry be of divine institution, *Acts 14. 23. Titus 1. 5.* without which no man may meddle with the office, *Rom. 10. 15. Jer. 23. 21.* yet it is possible that it may be made void and null in several cases; either wholly, or in part.

1. Wholly, and that in these three or four cases.

1. When the person or persons pretending to invest another with the office, have no power or right so to do. This I hope will not be questioned. *Nemo dat quod in se non habet.* Should I be so mad, as to pretend to confer royal power and authority over these his Majesties dominions on any one whom I list? would any one that is in his right wits, take such a one to be therefore lawful King over these countries? Should a company of women or chil-

children pretend to install a Bishop in any of the Dioceses, is he therefore a Bishop? No, certainly; though the person be never so well qualified, who is to receive the office. It must be conferred by one that hath lawful power and might to do it, else it is but a piece of pageantry, or as a dubbing of a Knight by the King's Jester. But whether Ordination, performed by any single person whatsoever, be null, or rather defective only, I shall not now stand to examine. As for him that receives his office (I mean the *jus fungendi officio*, right of officiating) only from the people, is just as much and as truly an officer, according to the laws of Christ, and rule of Scripture, as he is a Captain or Colonel according to the laws of men, that hath receiv'd his Commission from a company of Souldiers, that have voluntarily list'd themselves under him; which I take to be an intolerable and treasonable usurpation, evidently tending to confusion and ruine. We readily grant to the people a power of electing their own officer; but the bare electing of a person to a particular charge, is far enough from investing him with the office. 'Tis true, volunteers (such as all professors ought to be under the Gospel) have the priviledge of chusing their own Captain; but their chusing him is not that, which makes him a Captain, though it be the ground of their relation to him, and makes him to be *their* Captain. For Rulers to receive

See Bailly's  
Dissuasive,  
p. 183. &c.  
& p. 186. &  
194.

receive their ruling authority from the ruled, is as preposterous in ecclesiasticks, as for the fountain to receive its being and supply from the streams is in physicks.

2. *When the persons invested are incapable.* This will surely be granted by all that understand common sense. If the *matter* be incapable, all endeavours or pretenses of introducing the *form* are vain. Now this incapacity is two-fold, Natural, and Moral.

1. *Natural.* Women, children, idiots, mad-men, &c. are under a *natural* incapacity. I do not speak now of what may, or may not be done *de facto*, but *de jure*. If all the Bishops and Presbyters in the world should, by unanimous consent (supposing it possible for them to be so infatuated) in never so orderly a way, commit the office of a Minister of the Gospel to such a one, it were *ipso facto* void and null; because here is not the *actus primus*, or that which is essentially pre-requisite to the exercise of the office, which ordination is supposed to make way for, and is in order unto. Such a thing would be but the abusing of an Ordinance, not the celebrating of it.

2. *Moral.* I suppose that this would be also easily granted, if we were but agreed what that is, which doth *morally* incapacitate a person for such an office. But how to be agreed here, I know not, unless we agree first to stand to the *award* of Scripture, which ought to have



have a casting voice, and to put an end to all strife among Christians. There are these three or four things, which, I think, will easily be granted, to render a person morally incapable of this office, according to Scripture rule.

1. 1. *Gross ignorance; For the Priests lips should preserve knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth; for he is the messenger of the Lord of hosts, Mal. 2. 7.* Those that are the Lord's messengers, are in a competent measure thus qualified. God sends none, nor allows any to be sent, but such as are able to do their message. This is the great end of their being sent: therefore he that is unqualified for this, his commission is so far null. *The servant of the Lord* (says the Apostle) *must be apt to teach,* 2 Tim. 2. 4. *διδάσκων, docendi peritum, & aptum ad docendum.* But he that is not able cannot be apt to teach.

2. 2. *Open prophaneness. A Bishop must be blameless, sober, and of good behaviour, &c.* 1 Tim. 3. 2. The messenger of Christ must not be a son of *Belial*. I do not say that he is not to be esteemed a Minister of Christ, that is not a real member of Christ; but that open prophaneness doth morally incapacitate a person for this office, and make it void and null (that is, in *statu quo*) though never so solemnly received; as shall be proved by and by.

3. 3. *Idolatry in worship.* Though every evil in the ministration or external modes of di-  
vine

vine worship be not to be branded with the foul name of idolatry, nor sufficient to warrant a separation from it: for (as one says well)

“Experience and sense tells us, that humane ministrations, even of divine matters, are not ordinarily without humane miscarriages. Reason tells us, humane miscarriages or infirmities must be allowed for; yet Religion tells us that humane miscarriages, especially in divine matters, must not be allowed of. But a worship that is idolatrous, or that hath a real, and not only an imaginary and fancied, or falsely supposed or imputed appearance of idolatry, doth not only warrant, but require a disowning and a disavowing of it, whoever he be, or how well soever qualified, that administers it. This, I think, is no such strange news from Scripture, that I need to quote any of those many texts that assert it.

*Christ. confes.  
p. 46. &c.*

4. *An heretical judgment*, which subverts any of the essentials, or fundamentals of the Christian Faith. Whatever such an ones qualifications be in other respects, and whatever Orders he hath received from men, they are void and null, on the account of the persons moral incapacity, and that for these reasons.

I. Such as these are not, according to Scripture law, so much as visible members of the Church of Christ; much less are they Ministers; but if they were in the Church, they ought to be censured, and cast out, and look'd

on (that is so continuing) as Heathens, *Matth.* 18: 17. But if the Bishop or any others should ordain an Heathen to any office in the Church of Christ, I think few would doubt of the nullity of such an ordination.

2. 2. Such as these cannot possibly answer the ends of Ordination. But common sense and reason tells us, that those means which reach not their end are (*caeterum*) void and frustraneous.

3. 3. The ordination of such persons doth not only fall short of, but runs contrary to its end. This is certain, that their ordination cannot empower them to exercise such abilities and qualifications, as they have not; but to vent that which they have: which is, in effect, to capacitate them to play the wolves, and do mischief in the Church of Christ; to pull it down, and not to build it up.

*Object.* *Obj.* If you say, that the Orders received under these personal incapacities are not null'd, because they are not to be repeated, in case this ignorance, prophaneness, idolatry and heresie be removed; but the person is to be re-admitted to the exercise of his office, on the account of his once received orders.

*Ans: 1.* *Ans.* I grant it (whatever others will do) I do not say that this moral incapacity doth destroy the Ordination once received in its esse, but in its exerceri; and that only in *statu quo*, while the persons continue thus incapacitated.

3. When

3. *When a person apostatizes from, either*

1. *His Office.* If it be possible for a person to apostatize from the Church it self, it is possible sure to divest himself of all office in the Church. What reason hath any one to own him as a Minister, that wilfully casts off the office and will not own it himself? though it may be, this will not excuse him in the sight of God. Some there are, that renounce their Ordination, by which they were impowred to exercise their ministerial gifts, that they may lead a party among the Separatists, or for worldly advantage. These, I think (whatever their Doctrine be) have disingaged all the people of God from following or obeying them, as Ministers of Christ; though, if they would return, they might exercise the Office by virtue of their first Ordination, if received from a lawful authority, and sound as to its essentials.

2. *Or from the duties of his office.* To cast off the duties of his office, is, in effect, to cast off the office it self. Those that refuse to feed the flock, are not shepherds, but strangers; such as the Scripture calls *dumb dogs*, Isa. 56. 10. Those that feed them with poison instead of milk, and give stones or dirt instead of bread; whatever men may call them, they are none of Christ's Ministers. Those that apparently lead the people either by their doctrine or practice in the way to Hell, and in disobedience

dience to the laws of Christ, do thereby forfeit the priviledge of their office. If a Captain will lead his Souldiers to fight against their Captain-general, he is to be deserted and disowned, and to be dealt with (though not by the rude multitude) in a legal process, as an enemy and rebel.

4. 4. *When a person shall forfeit his office by some capital offence against men, as treason, rebellion, murder, &c. though he continue in other respects capable enough of a competent discharge of the office. This was Abiathar's case, 1 Kings 7. for which he was justly deposed by King Solomon, chap. 2. 26. But this may be referred to some of the former.*

2. 2. *An Ordination may become null and void in part. That is, as to the exercise of the office in this or that particular Congregation, and that by unnecessary and unjust intrusion. An intruder is no officer, so far as he is an intruder. I am not of their mind who think that a Minister is no Minister out of his own Congregation, who make the most solemn and regular Ordination no more than a popular election. Nor do I think that the assignment of persons in office to their particular charges doth always necessarily depend on the peoples choice. But this I think, that he, that wrongfully obtrudes himself, or is obtruded on a people, contrary to the laws and liberties, which Christ hath establish'd in his Church,*  
for



for its order, peace, edification and comfort, plays the thief and the robber, and can by such a people be justly look'd upon as no other, whatever his personal qualifications or allowance from men may be. Yet I confess, that (at least in some cases) mere usurpation or tyranny of the officers, supposing them otherways qualified, and lawfully commissioned, is not sufficient to justify a separation or utter disowning them; but, as for safety of the common peace and interest, tyrants and usurpers in a Commonwealth must be quietly submitted to by the common people, patiently bearing what they cannot redress, till God shall plead their cause for them in a regular and just way; so must they do here: for I find, that though the Scribes and Pharisees were usurpers of *Moses* chair, yet the people were (as the case then stood with them) required to hear them.

Thus have I done with the negatives.

2. I shall answer to the question *positively*.

2.

1. Whom you may. 2. Whom you must hear.

1. *Whom you may hear.* I answer,

1.

1. *Those that are not of thine own judgment or persuasion, may be heard.* To separate on every difference in judgment or practice, as some are apt enough to do, is worse than *Brownism*, which inevitably runs all order into confusion, and the Church into ruine.

1.

Yet lest I should seem here to open a door to the weak and unstable, to run and associate themselves with any one, that shall but presume to teach them, without any respect had to their doctrine or opinions, you must remember what was said before. You may acknowledge none as Ministers of Christ, nor hear them as such, but those that are both qualified and regularly commissioned, according to the laws of Christ, and continue therein. The digression would be too large to mention all those cases and quarrels that might arise from this position, for which I refer the reader to those that have of late *ex professo* treated of these questions of the times.

See Christ.  
Confess. &c.

2.

2. *Those that are not truly godly may be heard.* Christ himself required the people to hear some, whose practices it was not safe to imitate, *Matth. 23. 3.* 'Tis not true grace that doth formally make a Minister of Christ, but ministerial qualifications and commission. *Judas* was a minister of Christ, and yet a *devil*. Though *the prayers of the wicked are an abomination to the Lord*; this need not terrifie the people. The promise of success is not made to the person, but to the office. A man may be an instrument in God's hand of saving others, and yet himself be a *cast-away*. The sin of *Eli's* sons I take to be their horrible and sacrilegious prophaneness; therefore called *sons of Belial*, *1 Sam. 2. 12.* *Homines sine jugo*  
que

*qui vivendi legem nullam habent.* *ἀνομιοι, λοιμοι, ἀσεβεις*, dissolute, lawless, irreligious wretches, that stuck not at any villanies for the satisfying of their lusts. 'Tis true, they violated the instituted law of the Sacrifice, in several material circumstances of it, but it was only for the fulfilling of their voluptuous minds. This indeed, the Text says, *made men to abhor the offering of the Lord*, that is, *vehementer incessabant*, as some say, they fearfully reproached and blasphemed the very worship of God for their sakes. Or, as others, *A Dei cultu & reverentia abstraherantur*, they were made to withdraw and forsake the service of the Lord. So, *verse 24. Ye make the Lords people to transgress. Hinc abigitis populum Jehovahæ*, Ye drive away the people by your licentious carriages, and insufferable abuses. But whether the peoples simple forbearance to appear at *Shiloh*, under the ministration of these sons of *Belial*, on this account, that they might testify against their wickedness, supposing that they did thus forbear, were justifiable, I know not well how I may determine, without more words than I have now to spare. Only I think the women that had any care of their modesty had need to forbear, *verse 22.* and, I think, might justify it before God. There is no doubt but that these wickednesses of the Priests did produce manifold miscarriages and breaches among the people, which

should and might have been prevented in the Priests, by *Eli* their father, either by reforming or removing them, and in the people too, if they had, as they ought, understood their duty. But whether, or how far they separated from actual communion in the service of the Tabernacle, or whether it were the case only of *Shiloh*, and the personal abuses only of the two wicked Priests, or whether the people did well or ill in it, I think doth not so much concern us to enquire, as some imagine; because the case of the Church of *Israel* (which was then the whole Catholick Church of God in the world) and the case of any one Church, though never so large, of the Gentiles now under the Gospel (which is but a part and branch of the whole) is not alike. Again, if the people did not separate from them, I think it was *Eli's* sin and ruine too, that he had not separated them from their office, if nothing else would have reclaimed them. Indeed, when the wickednesses of a Minister are scandalously broken out upon him, and persisted in after admonition, it is but poor encouragement for a people, that have any respect to their own souls, or the credit of the Gospel, to honour his ministry with their presence. Yet for all this that hath been said, I hope, that which was first asserted, will be granted, that though a Minister be not in an estate of grace himself, nor gives any special

cial evidences of his being so, but rather of the contrary, yet he may, and, in many cases, ought to be heard, at least while he avoids scandalous wickednesses.

If any should question that of *Matthew Obj.* 7. 15, 16. *Beware of false prophets, which come to you in sheeps cloathing, but inwardly are ravening wolves. Ye shall know them by their fruits; do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? by their fruits ye shall know them.*

I answer, that by the fruits here, cannot be *Ans.* understood, on the one hand, the fruits of an holy life, which may be judg'd evidential of true grace; or, on the other hand, the fruits of prophaneness or ungodliness, the visible evidences of an unsatisfied heart. These are not the *χαρακτηριστικά* or distinguishing marks, whereby these prophets shall be known, whether they be true or false: For they are such, as shall *come in sheeps cloathing*: i. e. with a strong pretense and fair shew of innocency and holiness. 'Tis true, false prophets are many times *sons of Belial*, persons of an impure and scandalous conversation, but not always so. *But inwardly they are ravening wolves*, outwardly they are saints; but rotten at the heart. This is not given as a mark, whereby they shall be known, for none can judge of the hidden things of the heart, further than they appear in the life, but God alone, whose sole prerogative it is; but it is



used here as a caution to prevent the peoples credulity and readiness to run after them, that were never sent of God to lead them. And how shall these be known? Something seems to be tacitly intimated in this, that it is said, *they come unto you; I have not sent these prophets, yet they run. I have not spoken to them, yet they prophesied*, Jer. 23. 21. They come not in by the right door; are not admitted according to Scripture order and rule; but like *Corab* and his accomplices, on a false pretense of holiness, intrude themselves into the office which they have no call to. And yet by this mark they may not always be discerned; but *by their fruits ye shall know them*. What can we rationally understand by *their fruits*, but their doctrine, which is the proper fruit of prophets, as such? Let their lives be what they will, their doctrine discovers what they are. Therefore if this be corrupt or unsound, beware of them, they are *ravening wolves*, and *not shepherds*. Yet here to prevent censorious scrupulosity and separation, which may prove as great a mischief as the other; you must know, 1. That every thing is not an error which seems so to me or thee, though we seem to be very confident; for doubtless we are fallible as well as other men. 2. Every real error in doctrine is not sufficient to denominate a person to be a ravening wolf, nor to justify a separation; but only such errors, as

do immediately, or proximately subvert some fundamental; and these errors obstinately retained and persisted in after admonition.

3. *Any one that preaches or but pretends to preach, or any way to worship God, though never so falsely or idolatrously, may be heard.* But observe, that I speak here of bare hearing, or a man's simple presence, and that occasionally only, at such preaching or worshipping, which doth not include his conjunction in, or countenance of that which is evil. For that it is lawful for a person (at least in some cases, and on some reasons) to be present at the most idolatrous worship, or most blasphemous doctrine, is clear from the example of *Paul's* being present at the superstitious usages of the *Athenians*, *Acts* 17. 23. and *Elijah's* presence at the idolatrous sacrifices of *Baal's* Priests, *1 Kings* 18. 23. To be present only as a spectator or auditor, and not as a member, nor in order to being a member, is not that which contracts the guilt. But here you must take with you these three cautions.

1. There must be respect had to a persons qualifications. *Non singulis singula conveniunt.* False doctrine and worship is like intoxicating liquor, which every one is not able to hear. God calls no one to any service in this kind, that he is not qualified for. Though some may adventure among pestilential diseases, and are

are called to it, yet it is not safe nor lawful for every one so to do. The silly lamb may not draw near the kennel of foxes, though the armed shepherd may.

2. Nor is bare *qualification* sufficient; but respect must be had to a persons *ends* in it, according to which the action is to be determined. If the end be not good, the action will be evil. And your end in this thing, if good, can be no other than such as these, *viz.* the spiritual advantage of your selves, or of others. Of your selves, by confirming you the more in the truth, and furnishing you the better to plead for the truth, and against those false ways, &c. Or the advantage of others; by testifying against that which is evil, and vindicating the truth, and thereby reclaiming those that are reclaimable, from those pernicious ways, or doctrines they are seduced by. This was that drew zealous *Elijah* among the Priests of *Baal*, not to communicate with them, or to countenance them, but to confute and confound them. And the like was holy *Paul's* business among the *Athenians*.

3. Nor is it enough that your *qualifications* be good, your *ends* right; but there must be a regular *call* too. Good ends will not justify a good action, when it is out of season. This *call* you may discern. 1. If you find a secret impulse of the spirit on your hearts, provoking you to it: But because this may be delu-

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fory and dangerous, there must be the more care taken to examine your ends and principles, lest it should be only the instigation of vain-glory, faction, envy, curiosity, or the like. 1. If there be no other duty, publick or private, then in season, that more necessarily requires thine attendance. 3. If thou be likely to reach those good ends, thou aimest at, and pretendest to. 4. If (all circumstances of times, places, and persons considered) thou art likely to do more good than harm by it. 5. If (having first sought God) thou hast the advise and counsel of the best and wisest of thy fellow-Christians, or guides for doing it. This will make thy call clear and warrantable.

2. *Whom you must hear.*

1. *Ordinarily and statedly*, those whom God hath in his providence set over you; provided that they be competently qualified (which must be determined by those, who are best able, and whose office it is to judge) and lawfully commissioned to preach; and to have the oversight and rule of that particular Congregation, to which you are related; though, it may be, they be none of the ablest, wisest, or holiest; nay, though they had not your particular voices or consent in their election. I shall not wander, nor lead my readers at present into those *bryars*, those thorny queries and cavils, that may spring from this position,

nor

nor examine those lurking of such, as make too little conscience of causeless and sinful separations. For my own part, I think (though the division of the Church into parochial Congregations, be not *jure divino*, any more than those *ruler of the people*, which *Moses* set over them, by the advice of *Jethro*, *Exod. 18. 25.* yet) that those, that at first set these parochial bounds, had more reason and religion for what they did, than most of those that have been so forward to abolish all these distinctions of Churches, as needless, tyrannical, or antichristian. 'Tis true, in times of persecution, or when the publick worship is so corrupted, as that persons cannot communicate in it without sin, but must necessarily separate from it, the parochial bounds are not of that use or consequence.

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2. *Occasionally*, you must hear (as opportunities are offered, and as God gives you liberty and ability) all those that are qualified and sent, as I have already said, though not the Ministers of your own Congregations, nor of your own persuasions, nor of very great abilities. If it be our duty to preach in season and out of season, *i. e.* on all convenient occasions, it must needs be the peoples duty so to hear. But as there is a diversity of gifts in the teachers, and a diversity of apprehensions and capacities in the hearers; so every ones gifts tend not alike to the edification of all: where-



wherefore, without the breach of Christian charity, peace, or order, a person may use his liberty in the choice of his teacher; so that it be done sincerely, prudently, and humbly, with reference to that great end of his better edification, and so, as that his own lawful Pastor be not discouraged or justly offended, nor an evil example likely to be given to others to gad from their own folds and shepherds, on unwarrantable grounds, the consequence whereof may be very dangerous. But I have gone a great deal farther than I intended on this branch of the direction.

3. We are next to consider the *matter*; or *what we should hear*. 'Tis our dear Saviour's advise, *Mark 4. 24. Take heed what you hear*. Not only *how*, or *whom*; but *what*: The words deserve a little paraphrase.

1. *Take heed*. βλέπετε. Look well to it; be wary and careful: look on it, look round it, look thorow it. Try and examine it well before you lay it up in your treasury. Be not too rash and credulous, nor ready to prostitute your ears to every wind of doctrine; but bring it to the touch-stone of Scripture, and balance of the sanctuary. The world is full of cheats. Satan hath his factors abroad, that hunt for the precious life, and will (if possible) deceive the very elect. A mistake here is of no light consequence, therefore look to it.

2. *What you hear*. Though you may not be

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be able to prevent the bare hearing; yet take heed what you entertain, what you believe, and yield up your judgments and consciences to. *Prove all things, hold fast that which is good,* 1 *Theff.* 5. 21. I cannot particularly instance in all those doctrines that you should take heed of; but generally

1. *1. Take heed of those doctrines that intrench on your Christian liberties.* 'Tis the Apostles charge, *Gal.* 5. 1. *Stand fast therefore in the liberty where with Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.* Betray not that liberty, which Christ hath died to purchase for you. He speaks here of the liberty which is opposed to that servitude, which they had formerly been held under by the law of ceremonial ordinances, which he calls *weak and beggarly elements*, chap. 4. 9. and from which he had much ado to wean them. *Whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage. Ye observe days, and months, and times, and years. I am afraid of you.* Stand fast therefore in your liberty. Christ hath broken off that yoke from the neck of his Church, which neither our fathers nor we were able to bear: therefore take heed how you return again to it. 'Tis not only your own personal privilege, that lies at stake; but 'tis the common concernment of the whole Church of Christ in the world. But if Mosaical rites and ceremonies were so dangerous to the Church then, what are Romish heathen-

*Ans.* 19. 10.

heathenish, antichristian ceremonies, inventions and impositions now? 'Tis true, the Apostle, *Rom. 14.* grants a charitable dispensation of those abolished ordinances to such as were weak in the faith, that, like old bottles were not able to bear the new wine of the Gospel-ministration, but made real conscience of observing *Moses* his law still, at least in some things. For their sakes the Apostles were fain sometimes to judaize, that they might not offend or discourage them; but this was only *pro tempore*, and with reference to this end and design, of gaining the Jews to the faith, as he professes at large, *1 Cor. 9. 19, 20, 21, 22, 23.* *Unto the Jews I became as a Jew, that I might gain the Jews.---To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak.* And he advises others to walk by the same rule of charity. Yet for all this, when these or any other the like ceremonies or humane inventions shall come to be imposed as necessary, to the violation of our Christian liberty, the case is quite alter'd. The Apostle, who before was so yieldable, is in this case inexorable, *Gal. 2. 4, 5.* he withstood the false brethren, who came in privily to spy out their liberty, which they had in Christ Jesus, that they might bring them into bondage, *To whom we gave place by subjection, no not for an hour.* Yea, and sharply reprov'd *Peter* himself, for compelling the Gentiles to live as did the Jews, *ver. 14.*

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2. Take heed of that doctrine that doth any way derogate from the glory of free grace, or attributes that to the power of man's free-will, or to the merit of mans faith, repentance, or good works, which is due alone to the efficacy and merit of the spirit, and blood of Christ. Remember what the Apostle says, Rom. 7. 18. For I know that in me, that is in my flesh, there dwelleth no good thing. No good abilities, nor so much as good inclinations. For who maketh thee to differ, and what hast thou, that thou didst not receive? 1 Cor. 4. 7. Where is boasting then? it is excluded: by what law? of works? Nay, but by the law of faith, Rom. 3. 27. 'Tis the grand design of God in his Gospel, to advance and glorifie the riches of free grace; therefore whatsoever oppugneth this design, is of Antichrist and of hell.

3.

3. In a word: Take heed of all those doctrines, that any way tend to idolatry, superstition, licentiousness, schism, the slighting of Scripture, prophatation of the Lords day, vilifying of the ministry, destruction of the Churches discipline and government. What shall I say? Hold fast the form of sound words which you have heard of us [according to Christ and his Apostles] in faith and love which is in Christ Jesus, 2 Tim. 1. 13. Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. Coloss. 2.

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Though an Angel from heaven preach any other Gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. Gal. 1. 8. If any man teach otherwise, and consent not to wholesome words, even the words of our Lord Jesus Christ, and to the doctrine which is according to godliness, he is proud, knowing nothing, but dotting about questions, and strifes of words. -- From such withdraw your selves. 1 Tim. 6. 3, 4, 5.

13. *What you do, do with all your heart: be upright.* Dir. 13. A rotten foundation is never like to hold long. If the heart be not right, there's nothing right: Hypocrisie is like the worm in Jonas's gourd, which sooner or later will smite and wither the fairest profession. Apostasie is the natural child of hypocrisie, and how can it otherwise be? *Can the rush grow up without mire? or the flag without water? or a house stand without a foundation?* *Alexander* was once a professor, almost a martyr, Acts 19. 33, 34. but afterwards a blasphemer, 1 Tim. 1. 20. then a persecutor, 2 Tim. 4. 14. which evidently discovers, that his heart was never right with God. It is the character of a true servant of Christ, to do the will of God from the heart, Ephes. 6. 6. *not with eye-service as men please.* Though men may be pleased with eye-service, God will not. The hypocrite cannot please God, because he cannot deceive him. Therefore in every duty, be sure that you offer to God a whole heart. *He brought*



that which was torn, and the lame and the sick, thus ye brought an offering; should I accept this of your hands, saith the Lord, Mal. 1. 13. A divided and unsound heart is an offering that God abhors. Look to your principles then, and to your ends; take heed of serving the designs of the flesh, or of the world, upon Christ and your profession. Sincerity will be your crown and your glory: it will crown you both with acceptance and with perseverance.

- I. 1. *With acceptance.* A sincere heart is an offering well-pleasing to that God that searcheth the heart. *Lying lips are abomination to the Lord; but they that deal truly are his delight,* Prov. 12. 22. *Behold, thou desirest truth in the inward parts,* Psal. 51. 6. But what God desireth he is well pleased with, and will accept. *For the righteous Lord loveth righteousness, his countenance doth behold the upright,* Psal. 11. 7. Uprightness is his nature, and therefore cannot but be his delight. *I know also my God, that thou triest the heart, and hast pleasure in uprightness,* 1 Chron. 29. 17. Sincerity procures acceptance both for the person and his duties. *The true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship him,* John 4. 23. Such as are upright in their way are his delights: those actions, whether civil or religious, that proceed from a sincere heart, are accepted of him.

him. Yea, it is a jewel of such value with him, that the meanest services are accepted for its sake. Though *Philadelphia* had but little strength, yet because of her sincerity, he would make her enemies know that he had loved her. Therefore a sincere heart is in his account and style a perfect heart, though otherwise guilty of many failings. Sincerity procureth that love in God, which covereth a multitude of sins. What great faults was *Asa* guilty of? *2 Chron.* 16. 7, 10, 12. But here is that which covers all, *1 Kings* 15. 14. *Nevertheless Asa's heart was perfect with the Lord all his days.* We read also of many foul failings in *Jehosaphat*, *Nevertheless there are good things found in thee, in that thou hast prepared thine heart to seek God,* *2 Chron.* 19. 3. I need not tell you what *David's* sins were, yet, who had such a testimony of *David*, that he was a man after God's own heart? So, though a multitude of the people, in *Hezekiah's* time had prophaned the Lord's Passover, eating it otherwise than it was written, and had not cleansed themselves according to the purification of the Sanctuary; yet because they had prepared their heart to seek God, the Lord accepted the prayer of *Hezekiah* for them, and healed them, *2 Chron.* 33. 18, 19, 20. One grain of sincerity sanctifies a whole mass of infirmities.

2. *With perseverance.* The essence of saving grace consists in the truth of it. This is

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that immortal seed that shall never perish. Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright, for the end of that man is peace, Psal. 37. 37. O continue thy loving kindness to them that know thee, and thy righteousness to the upright in heart, Psal. 37. 10. A prophetic prayer (one observes) hath the nature of a promise. All the promises in the book of God are made to the sincere heart, though sometimes under one qualification, sometimes under another. For how famous soever any one may seem to be in any grace, or zealous in any duty, this gives no right to the promise, without sincerity: But the Lord will give grace and glory, no good thing will be withhold from them that walk uprightly, Psal. 84. 11. Though grace be never so low in degree, yet if sincere, it shall surely be crowned in glory. The least spark of true grace springs from the divine nature, which shall infallibly mature unto a full and eternal perfection.

Dir. 14.

14. What you do, do with all your might; be diligent. This diligence is two-fold, with reference to the object of it, secular, or spiritual.

I.

1. Secular, or a diligence in and about the affairs of this life. This I take to be included, if not principally intended; in that of the Preacher, Eccles. 9. 10. Whatsoever thy hand findeth to do, do it with thy might. Negligence in any honest calling, or lawful and necessary under-

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undertaking, is unbecoming a man, much more a Christian. Idleness is the Devils shop, wherein he forges much of his mischievous work. If he find thee idle, he hath thee at an advantage, as once he surpriz'd *David* on his house-top. Out of that employment whereunto God hath called thee, and out of God's way, and consequently out of his protection; *We hear that there are some, which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busie bodies, 2 Thess. 3. 11.* Idle, and yet busie; and indeed those that are most idle, are wont to be this way most employed. Therefore he requires them, that with quietness they work, and eat their own bread, *verse 12.* and not to be slothful in business, *Rom. 12. 11.* This idle life and gadding humour the Apostle observ'd by some of the young widows, *1 Tim. 5. 13.* *And withall they learn to be idle.* Idleness, it seems, is one of the Devils arts; and what's the fruit of it? *Wandering about from house to house, and not only idle, but talkers also, and busie bodies, speaking things which they ought not.* Verily, I scarce know what that wickedness is, that idleness opens not the door to. Yet here remember, that thou art to steer betwixt *Seylla* and *Charybdis*, an excess on either hand. Though it be the duty of a Christian to be diligent in the calling, wherein God hath placed him; yet, *he that warreth intangleth not himself in the affairs of this life, that he may*

*Please him that hath chosen him to be a souldier,*  
 2 Tim. 2. 4. Take heed of taking more on thy hands or head, than thou canst well comport with, and manage with a due subseruency unto higher things. To be diligent, is a duty, but to be intangled is a misery, and ordinarily a sin: For when the hands are intangled in a multitude and variety of worldly business, the heart is not wont to be very free. Therefore let thy diligence be guided by this rule, and grounded on thy obedience to God, not to thy lusts.

2. 2. *Spiritual.* This indeed is the diligence, that men are most defective in. Remember what became of the slothful servant, *Matth. 25. 28.* Take the talent from him, and cast the unprofitable wretch into utter darkness; there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. The slothful servant is an unprofitable servant, good for nothing, neither for his master nor for himself. Therefore giving all diligence, add to your faith vertue, & to vertue knowledge, and to knowledge temperance, and to temperance patience, and to patience godlines, and to godlines brotherly kindnes, and to brotherly kindnes charity, 2 Pet. 1. 5, 6, 7. and Give diligence to make your calling and election sure; for if ye do these things, ye shall never fall, ver. 10. 'Tis the hand of the diligent that maketh rich, Prov. 10. 4. which is true both in temporal and spiritual cases. Sirs! you have to do with diligent and watchful



fulenemies, who are (*Argus like*) *centum luminibus cincti*, full of eyes, that will be sure to lose no advantage of doing mischief. The Devil and his instruments are never weary: they will compass sea and land to make a proselyte. *For they sleep not except they have done mischief, and their sleep is taken away unless they cause some to fall*, Prov. 4. 16. Our enemies are busie and zealous, and is it safe; nay, is it not shameful for us to be idle? Besides, our spiritual trading-stock is small, idleness will soon eat it out, and bring it to nothing. A handful of meal in a barrel, and a little oyl in a cruse, is not like to hold long without a miracle, if not supplied by the fruits of industrious care. This was that undid the slothful servant; he had but one talent to trade on, and that he laid up, which, if it had been wisely and diligently laid out, might have brought him in a competent and comfortable increase. This sinful indifferency is one of the greatest enemies to a spiritual proficiency. Idleness will be a moth in the garments of your souls, and as rottenness in your bones. Are you poor and low in grace? Poor men (you know) must work hard, if they mean to live comfortably and honestly in the world. You must resolve either on all possible diligence, or resolve to be undone. *By much slothfulness the building decayeth, and through idleness of the hands the house droppeth through*, Eccles. 10. 18. How

often have I seen the fruitful husbandry of a poor labouring man, on the barren coast of an high way? how pleasant and profitable a plot hath his care and culture in a little time recovered out of the hard rock, and raised a little paradise in the midst of a wilderness? Every useful herb and pleasant flower springs and thrives, by the blessing of God, under his industrious hand. And would not your spiritual diligence do the like for you in the gardens of your hearts, and by little and little turn a forrest into a fruitful field? Again, we are but stewards of what we here enjoy, and must shortly be accountable; therefore it concerns us to be the more diligent. Our time, strength, parts, ministers, sabbaths, ordinances, and all other helps, common and special, are none of ours, but our masters. Were they ours, we might do with our own what we would, but being his, woe to us, if we be found negligent or unfaithful in the improvement of them. Nay, we have been idle a long time already, our work is behind hand; we have loiter'd and plaid the truants, so that our work is now, not to improve time only, but to redeem time, to recover again what is lost, which cannot be done but by doubling of diligence. Lastly, they are hard and impoverishing times we live in. Iniquity doth abound, and the love of many is grown cold. How many eminent traders, that once pre-  
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tended highly for Christ, have miserably broken and turned their backs, and shamefully deserted what once they were zealous for? Had not you need to be diligent, when so many lose ground, and turn bankrupt? Learn of the vertuous woman, *Prov. 31. 27. She looketh well to the ways of her household, and eateth not the bread of idleness.* She is careful that every member of her family shall do his part; every servant and every child shall be employed according to his plate and capacity. Every grace, every faculty, every member must be set and kept at work. But alas! when every hour spent with God is accounted lost time, and, with *Judas*, men are ready to cry out, what need this waste? When they can toil from morning till night, and from day to day in the cares and businesses of the world with vigour and delight; but in those duties that more immediately concern their souls, are hardly able to keep themselves waking or serious for an hour: certainly such diligence is not like to maintain their profession long in difficult times. *The desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labour, Prov. 21. 25.* Good wishes and desires without answerable care and endeavours, is very bad proceeding for times of tryal.

*15. Make good your spiritual watch, and Dir. 15. especially these two ways.*

*1. Against the first slips or deviations of the heart*

*heart toward that which is evil.* He that will prevent falling, and the sad effects of falls, must take heed of tripping and stumbling. 'Twas but a wanton amorous glance of the eye at first, that drew holy *David* into that horrible guilt of adultery, murder, and dissimulation; therefore, *Turn away mine eyes from beholding vanity*, Psal. 119. 37. One turn of a covetous greedy eye cost *Achan* his life, with all his family, *Josb.* 7. 21. One sin makes way for another. Oh take heed of tempting God to leave thee, and Satan to surprize thee. Sin is like the bramble, it grows in bushes, where thou allowest one, thou wilt quickly find more. It is a fountain, its spring is natural and indefatigable; if once it break up, its a hard matter to stop or suppress it. It is a chain, one link draws on another. The Devil hath his *methods* to entice and ensnare, *Ephes.* 6. 11. *ταῖς μεθοδεῖαις τοῦ διαβόλου*. First one step, then another. Therefore do by sin as stories tell us the *Pigmies* do by the *Cranes*, every spring they go forth in companies to destroy their nests, and eggs, who would else increase upon them and devour them. The only effectual way to watch against sin, is to be before hand with it, to crush it in the shell, before the Cockatrice break forth. Oh that Christians were so wise, as to understand and practice this great piece of spiritual prudence! How easily might the dishonours of God and the

the wounds of conscience be prevented? But this is ordinarily our blind stupidity, not to consider, whither we are wading, till we are over head and ears; nor to see or mistrust the net that is spread, till it be drawn upon us. If Satan can perswade thee to pronounce this A, he will easily lead thee through his whole alphabet, *Rev. 4. 6.* The world is called a *sea of glass*: but glass is a slippery metal; he that walks on this glassie sea had need have his feet well shod with the preparation of the Gospel, and pray with *David, Psal. 17. 5. Hold up my goings in thy paths, that my footsteps slip not.* He that walks here had need of circumspect eyes, and sober feet; 'tis dangerous falling on such a ground: he that hath fallen once, is the apter to fall again. The back-sliders way is a smooth, but slippery way, *Psal. 73. 18.* Hence it is that we see such heaps upon heaps. Here a knot of good fellows, Atheists, Epicures, tumbling head-long to beggary and shame, and from thence to hell; and there a pack of Pharisaical hypocrites, or blind idolaters. Here a crawling company of earthly-minded muck-worms, and there a crew of bloody persecutors. Oh what need hath a Christian to take heed to his steps? every fall cripples thee more and more, and makes thee the worse able to stand. The first step in many cases, is half the way; and so it is here.

2. *Against the least slips.* Remember, little  
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sins usually open the door to greater. *Nemo repente fit pessimus*. Though indeed there be no sin little, because no little God to sin against, no little Saviour to redeem, no little price paid for it, nor little hell to punish it: yet those sins that are comparatively little, or that are so circumstanced, that it may seem doubtful whether they be sins or no, may open the gates to more potent enemies. Little thieves break in many times, where greater cannot enter: and often is the silly soul betrayed by fair pretences of good ends. As *Tarpeia* opened the gates of the *Capitol* to their enemies the *Sabines*, *Nec dolo, sed puella pretium rei, quam gerebant in sinistris petierat, dubium clypeos an armillas*. Not out of any treacherous design to her Country; but either out of a covetous desire of those rich bracelets they wore on their arms; or rather (as *Stadius* the commentary opines) *ea spe, ut illos exarmaret nudatosque scutis jam Romanis feriendos traderet*. It was their shields that she required as a reward, hoping that being stript of these, she might deliver them to be smitten by the *Romans*: but see how ill this project prospered, both to her self and her friends: *Illis, ut & fidem solverent & ulciscerentur clypeis obruere*. --- *atrox in ipso aditu pugna, adeo ut Romulus Jovem oraret, ut sedam suorum fugam sisteret*. It cost her her life, and was like to have cost the *Romans* their royal City. The entertainment

*L. Flor. l. 2.  
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tainment of sinful motions, on the pretence of good designs, is neither warrantable nor safe. *Gideon* first gives way to a little vain-glory, on the account of his famous victory over *Midian*; this makes way for a further progress, to celebrate the victory by erecting of his costly *Ephod*, which indeed might have a fair colour of zeal and devotion, but his good intentions being vitiated by the co-working of a selfish principle, carried him first to an unwarrantable action, and then his people to idolatry, and his house to ruine, *Judges* 8. 27. The least degrees of back-sliding are dangerous, some are desperate. The least fall too much, though it do not break the neck; and the least loss too great, though it be not the loss of the crown. The loss of your comforts and of your evidences, though but *subjective* in the sense of them, is an impoverishing, if not an undoing loss. Nay, the smallest sin may be a reigning sin; for it is not the greatness, but the power of sin that makes it a king. A small sin committed with a high hand of security, presumption and customariness will more waste the conscience, than those that are far greater in themselves, but committed out of infirmity or sudden surprisal. A ship may perish as well on the sands as on the rocks. Sins that are accounted most venial and moderate, and only of humane infirmity; secret sins, that never appear in act; lodging

Dr. Reyn.  
3 Treat.  
P. 393.

Gen. 19 31.  
6.c.  
Mark 14.71.

Hab. 2. 5.

Aug. Conf.

lodging thoughts; sins of ignorance; natural concupiscence; sins of omission (as Dr. Reynolds excellently demonstrates) may all of them be reigning sins. A small leak in a ship, if not seasonably stopt, will as effectually sink it, as the springing of a plank. Nay, a small breach in many cases quickly frets it self bigger. One sin sucks in another, as it hath been with some of the best of some of God's servants. Lot's drunkenness drew him on to incest. Peter's diffidence first puts him upon denying his Master, and then on cursing and swearing too. It is a hard matter to stop a house when once it begins to tumble one part from another. Sin is like death and hell, which cannot be satisfied. *Omnis peccator peccat in seculo eterno.* The sinner is never weary sinning. As grace is, so may sin be compared to a grain of mustard seed; though never so small a bulk, it is mightily in growth. Though but like the Prophet's clouds, no bigger than a man's hand, yet it arises out of that sea of corrupt nature, that it ceaseth not till it fill the whole hemisphere of the soul. Take heed therefore how you plead for a Zoar, a little time. *Quia semina spernit, paulatim decedit.* Confide not in the consequence is wont to be. Little fishes wont to go in great companies, like turtle fish in great shoals, or little flies in great swarms. Again, take heed of letting go the least truths or the least duties. Christ would not have the

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fragments lost, but gathered into baskets. There is no truth nor duty, but is too good and too great to be cast away. He that means to thrive in the world, must take heed of small unnecessary wastes, as well as expences, observing the *Scotch* proverb, *A little and a little make a mickle*. Small couplings many times hold together great things, and the smallest truths are of great stress in the fabrick of God's house. Yet here we must always remember, that a due charitative respect must be had to those that are weak in the faith, according to the Apostles rules, *Rom. 14.* and conscientious care must be taken that we do not strain at gnat and swallow camels, nor busie our selves about circumstances and matters of less moment, as *Mint and Rue*, more than the nature and consequence of them doth require. Mat. 23. 24. Though some truths and laws of God are comparatively little, yet in respect of the Divine Verity, Majesty and Authority, which is the same in all revealed truths and duties, and the ground of the faith, reverence and obedience which we owe them, they are all great Hos. 8. 12. things. *מִי יָדָעֵיךָ דָּעָה*, *Acts 2. 11.* The least *jota* is greater than *heaven and earth*. Luke 16. 17. Though the circumstances of Religion may in themselves be small things, yet with reference to the consequences of them, they may be great. Circumstantial errors many times ushet in fundamental: as the Prelatical Hierarchy of

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old introduc'd the pontifical. How earnest is the Apostle, 2 *Thess.* 2. 1, 2, 3. to caution the *Thessalonians*, and to confirm them against the error of some of their false teachers, who had sickled them in the head with a conceit, that *the day of Christ was at hand*? Whether this *day of Christ* be to be understood of his last coming to judgment; as most interpret it, or of a second appearance of his, for the plenary destruction of Antichrist, the re-espousing of his ancient people the *Jews*, and the erecting of a glorious kingdom upon earth, as the *Christians* expound it, I shall not here enquire. This seem'd to be an error of no great danger, nay, one calls it a wholesome error. Yet be it never so tolerable in it self, the consequences of it were evil, *Uno absurdo concessa, mille sequuntur*, One error admitted opens the gates to a thousand more. If they might believe their false Teachers in this, without any authority from Christ or his true Apostles, then on the same grounds might they take their bare words for any thing else, and so quickly make shipwrack of all. And besides, should they take this for an Apostolical truth, a little time would evidence its falshood, and so they might be in danger of questioning all that ever they had been taught by the true Apostles, and be tempted to forsake and cast off all as meer delusions. What God hath not revealed or enjoyned is dangerous for us to be-

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lieve or practice. The best way to be kept from great transgressions is to watch against the smallest. So the abolished rites and customs of the Levitical worship, as Festivals, Meats, Circumcision, &c. the Apostle look'd upon, and sometimes practis'd, as things in themselves indifferent; therefore circumcised *Timothy*, *Acts* 16. 3. and shaved his head for his vow, *Acts* 18. 18. & *Acts* 21. 24. But yet these very indifferent things, as light as they are in themselves, if any one shall pretend to enforce them, or cry them up as necessary to the right worshipping of God, or claim an arbitrary domineering power of imposing them, this makes them intolerable, as appears by *Gal.* 2. 3, 4, 5. *Paul* could have circumcised *Titus* as well as *Timothy*, if he had seen the like cause for it. But if men shall intrench on his liberty, and seek to compel him to it, as that which is necessary *ex instituto*, then he protests against it, and decries it as a most dangerous thing. Behold, I *Paul* say unto you, that if ye be circumcised, *Christ* shall profit you nothing, *Gal.* 5. 2. So that you see what care there had need be taken of small matters, and that both in manners, faith and worship. I wish this matter were better understood.

See also  
1 Cor. 6. 12.

16. Censure not others, till you have first condemned your selves. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brothers eye, and considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye? Thou hypocrite,

*pocrite*, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye, and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brothers eye, *Matth. 7. 3, 5.* We are naturally apt to live more abroad than at home. *Utimur perspicillis magis quam speculis*, We use spectacles more than looking-glasses; love to pry into, and comment on other mens faults, but overlook our own: too much like the *Lamiae*, that were always blind in their own houses, but abroad were quick-sighted. God hath been a long time beating us out of this evil, both by his word, and by his rod; and yet this censorious spirit is venting it self on every light occasion, and that even among Professors themselves. What the Prophet once said of *Israel*, we may say of *England*, *Ezek. 22. 9.* *In thee are men that carry tales to shed blood*; that secretly smite their neighbour: Men of slanders, that delight in defaming and speaking evil of others; which is to play the Devil, who is therefore called *διάβολος*, the accuser of the brethren. Is it not enough that we have so many enemies to traduce and reproach us, but that we must do it our selves? We might here learn of the thrifty husbandman, who in stormy and bad weather finds work to employ himself within doors. Certainly, till we better learn to spare one another, we have little reason to hope that God should spare us. Oh Sirs! study your selves better; too little charity for others pro-

ceeds from too much charity for your selves, and argues a secret pride and self-conceit, which, as a worm at the root of your profession, will surely wither it sooner or later. Nay, prejudices taken up against the Professor, as it tends to, so it many times ends in a prejudice against the profession it self. *My brethren*, says *James*, *be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation*, James 3. 1. *Master* is taken here as Dr. *Mant.* in *loc.* says, for a supercilious reprover, one that is gotten into a chair of arrogance, magisterially enveighing against the errors of others. Now though God hath appointed some to be *censores morum*, masters of manners; yet let not every one turn censurer: be not many masters, or much masters, as some, who take *πολλοι* for *πολυ*, be not of a critical, captious spirit. It is an itch which every one is subject to; but this itch must be killed, or else thou shalt go for a *scab*. 'Tis the natural disease, especially of a wanton and flashy wit; a pleasing evil; the best of men are more or less toucht with this spiritual *scabby*. It is the fruit and symptome of pride, vain-glory, and self-conceit, or at best an irregular or malapart zeal, 1 *John* 2. 16. The pride of life is last mentioned, because last mortified; nay, the more other sins decay, the more is this apt to grow: This is the unhappy *Phoenix* that springs from others ashes. But observe the

danger of it, *Knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.* Either greater censures from men, as is usual to be repaid in the same coin, or the greater judgment and condemnation from God. *Matth. 18. 32, 33. And who art thou that judgest another man's servant? to his own master he standeth or falleth.* 'Tis an affront to God, in arrogating his prerogative; a wrong to thy neighbour, in usurping that power over him, that God never gave thee. Oh! let the failings of others always caule thee to reflect on thy self. He is fallen to day, I may fall to morrow; he is fallen by this temptation, I may fall by another as bad. *Aut sumus, aut fuimus, aut possumus esse quod hic est.* This censorious spirit is an enemy both to religious and civil society, a clandestine incendiary. *Behold how great a matter a little fire kindleth,--it setteth on fire the whole course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell,* James 3. 5, 6. What confusion hath it wrought in the world? what troubles, violence, and ruine hath it wrought in families, cities, and countries? what contentions, and quarrels, and separations, and blood-sheds, and inhumanities hath it broken out into? which are some of those wounds, that the Church of Christ is bleeding and languishing under to this day. Again, what egregious folly is it to be inquisitive after other mens sins, and over-look our own? to be pragmatically busied about other folks

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folks matters, and let our own highest concerns lie at six and sevens? *The eyes of a fool are in the ends of the earth*, Prov. 17. 24. Curious in sitting, and cruel in sentencing of others, but careless in examining and reforming himself; and no wonder if he that goes on gaping on others, and not heeding his own way stumble and fall over every block that lies in his way. Never hope to go straight nor steady in the narrow paths of Religion, while thou watchest others feet more than thine own.

I know that the envious, censorious spirit hath its shifts and pleas; their father the Devil, by whose spirit they are acted, is able to furnish them with such evasions, as shall serve to blind their own eyes. He knows that it is a sin, naturally so sweet to the flesh, that men are easily ensnar'd in it, and held under it. I shall not now stand to instance in these many specious excuses; whereby the envious carper at other men's faults thinks to justify himself; but shall only in general advise him, to see to it, and make sure of it, that he deceive not himself with any such pleas, as will not hold water at God's bar; but that he be then found clothed with that charity, which the Apostle describes, 1 Cor. 13. *Which suffereth long, and is kind, envieth not, vaunteth not it self, is not puffed up, doth not behave it self unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh*



no evil, rejoiceth not in iniquity, but rejoiceth in the truth, &c. remembering what Christ hath said, *Matth. 5. 22. Whosoever shall say, thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire:* that is, he that shall reproach mens. persons, on purpose to vilifie them, or to be avenged on them, or to raise his own reputation on other mens disgraces. Though Christ called the Scribes and Pharisees *Blind guides, hypocrites, fools, serpents, generation of vipers, &c.* and the Apostle called the *Galatians, fools;* and the *Cretians, liars,* and *slow-bellies,* and the Prophets called the *Princes of Israel, Rulers of Sodom, and people of Gomorrah, and King of Basan, &c.* Yet 1. We have reason to allow the master and rulers of the house more liberty of speech in reproving, than every servant or privateer in the family. Christ, and his Prophets, and Apostles cannot be imitated in all things, and may not in some things be limited by every one. 2. These did it by virtue of their office, being called to reprove sin sharply, as the cases required. 3. What they said was but too true, and therefore no abuse. 4. They were guided by an infallible Spirit, and knew when such reproofs were in season. 5. It proceeded not from a spirit of pride, or envy, or revenge, but of zeal for God, and compassion to men, intended not for their reproach, but their conviction and salvation. Remember, you that judge must shortly be judged; therefore as you

*Mat. 23. 16.  
27. 33. &c.*

*Gal. 3. 1.*

*Tit. 1. 12.*

*1/a. 1. 10.*

*Amos 4. 1.*

you desire and hope for favour and mercy then, exercise charity now.

17. *Wind up your hearts above the reach of the world.* Much hath been already spoken (though, it may be, not enough) to this purpose; therefore I shall add the less here, and give it in these two words, Dir. 17.

Live above the fears of the world.

Live above the hopes of the world.

I. *Live above the fears of the world.* Carnal fear is the high-way to back-sliding. The fear of man bringeth a snare; but who so putteth his trust in the Lord shall be safe, Prov. 29.25. The fear of man; whether it be taken objective or subjective, it comes all to one. A man's base and slavish fear, the fear of any thing that lies in the power of man to inflict; the fear of disrespect or ill-will, of reproaches, losses, persecutions or death, which is the utmost that he can do, *bringeth a snare. Laqueum sibi ponit*, he lays a snare for himself; lays himself the more open to that which he fears; and to the just displeasure of God, which is worse. *Cease ye from man, whose breath is in his nostrils, for wherein is he to be accounted of, Isa. 2. 22.* Of what value or power is he, that he should be either feared or hoped in? *Be not afraid of them that kill the body, and after that have no more that they can do, Luke 12. 4.* He that hath your fear will easily obtain your obedience. This is one of the Devils strongest cords;

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burst this, and you may, for the most part, burst all the rest with ease. Ah! when a Christian is but gotten so far above the world, as to be able to bid defiance to it, and challenge the worst than it can do; then is he fit to run his race with patience, and, in the strength of the Almighty, to accomplish the warfare he hath undertaken. *Say ye not a confederacy to all them to whom this people shall say a confederacy, neither fear ye their fear, nor be afraid. Sanctify the Lord of hosts himself, and let him be your fear, and let him be your dread,* Isa. 8. 12, 13. To fear a creature is to prophane the Creator. But of this more in another place.

2.

2. *Live above the hopes of the world.* Do not expect more of it than you are like to reap from it. To desire this earth is to brutify yourself. Carnal hopes bewray a carnal estate. To hope in a broken reed is the way to be deceived. To hope in that which never did, nor will, nor can perform what is hoped for, is a strange kind of madness. Yet this is the vanity of every carnal heart, to hope for some great matters from the world, for such, or such an estate, pleasures, profits, or preferments; or if there be no visible grounds of hope, yet is there a fervent thirst and desire after it. Now where the hope is plac'd, there is the heart plac'd, and thence is the happiness expected. That which hath your chiefest hope will command and turn you any way; as the world

varies,

varies. So do they whose hopes are from the world. Hope devours the soul to that which is its object. Hence is the fixedness and constancy of the Saints: as Christ, their rock is immovable, so is that hope that is rightly built on him. Sirs! never expect one hours security from the foulest apostasie, as long as your hopes are plac'd on this world. To this purpose also the Apostles words might be oppositely applied, *1 Cor. 15. 19. If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men most miserable.* If it be only a worldly and temporal good that we hope for by Christ, we are on many accounts the most miserable of all creatures. The sweet Singer of *Israel* hath written us a copy in this case, *Psal. 131. 2. Surely I have behaved and quieted my self, as a child that is weaned of his mother; my soul is even as a weaned child,* q. d. I have done with the deceitful breasts of this world, my hopes are fix'd on higher and better things. *Let Israel* [all those that profess the name of Christ] *hope in the Lord* [and not in lying vanities] *from henceforth and for ever.*

18. *Enrich your heads and hearts with the heavenly treasures of Scripture.* Beware of that antichristian brood, that hath of late years been spawn'd by the emissaries of the Beast, who cry up a light within in opposition to, and contempt of the externally revealed truths of the Word. You know your rule, *Isa. 8. 20.*

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To the law and to the testimony; if they speak not according to this word, it is because there is no light in them. Their spirit is from beneath. Once let go the Scripture, and you may bid farewell to all. What was the high commendation of *Apollos*, but this, that he was a *man mighty in the Scriptures*? Acts 18. 24. and of *Timothy*, that *from a child he had known the holy Scriptures*? 2 Tim. 3. 15. How shall any one be able to discern good from evil, or truth from falshood, if every one's private spirit must be judge? or whereby shall we try the spirits whether they be of God, as we are both concerned and required to do? 1 John 4. 1. Sirs! 'tis Scripture light, that instrumentally leads you into, and directs you in the living way, and not the dwindling taper of humane Reason, or the dark lanthorn, or *ignis fatuum* of the Elders traditions, or the stinking snuff of *Romish* implicit faith and blind obedience. Ignorance of the Scripture is one great ground of back-sliding. Hence it is that the antichristian apostate labours so much by might and slight to extinguish or corrupt the sacred light of Scripture. Here are the Oracles of God revealed; and the light of life discovered in the beauty and verity of it. Here are precepts to direct you, promises to quicken you, threatenings to awaken you, and examples both to encourage and caution you. 'Tis the true copy of your heavenly Father's last will and testament.



stament. Here stands on record all that he hath bequeathed to you, and all that he expects of you. Therefore as ever you hope to please him here, or to enjoy him hereafter, let his word dwell rightly in you; be often looking into it, and seriously meditating on it; make it a part of your daily study: as your bodies call for, so let your souls have their daily bread too. Read *Psalm* 19. & 119. and see what use holy *David* made of that part of Scripture, that was then extant, and labour to imitate him, and to parallel experiences with him, *verse* 105. *Thy word is a lamp to my feet, and a light unto my paths.* This light must be carried close by the feet, that every step may be plac'd aright, especially considering the many snares, and mires, and stumbling-blocks that the way is so full of. The way of the Saint is like the way of the Sea-man, he steers by the Heavens, that is, that heavenly light that shines in the Word of God, and is applied by his Spirit. Not by the common course of the times, or the opinions or practices of this or that or the other learned or godly man. These may err, and cause others to err with them. Sirs! is it no priviledge that God hath hitherto so graciously and miraculously preserv'd his holy Scriptures for us? Times have been that the Word of God was more precious, when one leaf was sold for more than many whole books now. The Lord grant that our slight-

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*Quisquā re-  
flum ut vider  
tenere mī-  
tur, non egr-  
ram debet a-  
spicere, sed  
calum. Lact.  
Audi; dicit  
Dominus, non  
dicit Donatus,  
aut Rogatus,  
aut Vincen-  
tius, aut Am-  
brosius, aut  
Augustinus,  
Aug. Ep. 48.  
Licet apprime  
eruditus, e-  
micus & pius,  
Cujusd.  
Glos.*

ing and abusing it may never again make it as precious and scarce in our, or in our posterities days.

*Dir. 19.* 19. *Examine well the incomparable odds that is between sin and suffering, and of two evils chuse the less.* The sting of death, and of all sufferings is sin. This is that which imbibes the cup, and poisons the arrow. Suffering without sin is as a dead lion, or a serpent without his teeth, or his spear, which you may easily play with. *And if ye suffer for righteousness sake, happy are ye, and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled,* 1 Pet. 3. 14. Sure you have no reason to be afraid of your happiness. Let the suffering overtake you, so you may but escape the sin; it is a fair escape, nor have you the least reason to complain. The peace of a good conscience is peace enough in this estate of warfare, which is a peace that passeth understanding, and in the darkest night it is, that a good conscience makes the sweetest melody. Believe it Sirs! there's more bitterness and horror in one sin, than in all the losses and sufferings that your bodies, names, or estates are capable of in this world or in the other. How acute and heroick an answer was that of the blessed Martyr, who being in travel in her prison a little before her martyrdom, and crying out under her pains, her Keeper ask'd her how she would endure the fire, that made such a noise at the bringing forth

— *Hi mu-  
rus aheneus  
esto.  
Sed confiteo  
sibi, nulla  
pallascere  
culpa.*

forth of a child. *Well enough*, said shee, *now I suffer for my sins, but then I shall suffer for my Saviour.* 'Tis sin that creates the hell in conscience, and conscience that is the worm in hell. Though no affliction be joyous in it self, yet in the greatest affliction there is joy, if sin be not imputed. Suffering offends but the creature, but sin offends the Creator: the one reaches but the body, and is but for the short term of a life; the other reaches the soul, and is entailed on eternity. Wherefore of two evils always chuse the less. Take heed of fancying or pretending a necessity of sinning. *Non admittit status fidei allegationem necessitatis delinquendi* (says Tertullian) *quibus una est necessitas non delinquendi.* There may be indeed, and oftentimes is a necessity of suffering; but let the case be what it will, never was there any soul involved in an invincible necessity of sinning, but that he might have escap'd by the way of duty active or passive; for such a necessity would wholly excuse: nor would it be consistent with the righteousness of God, to impute it or punish it as sin. I know no absolute moral necessity any man is under, but a necessity of loving and obeying his Maker. Other necessities are but *secundum quid*, as there may be a necessity of sinning with respect to thy carnal ease, credit, or favour with the world; but not with respect to thy real happiness; or that great end for which thou

thou hast thy being. And let me tell thee, this necessity conscience will be asham'd to plead, when it shall be arraign'd at God's tribunal.

*Dir. 20. 20. Make not Religion a summers fashion only, lest the covering of your shame prove at last the shame of your covering.* Be not like that *Bolsacus*, of whom *Beza* says, *Religionem ephemeram habere existimatur*. He could be of one Religion to day, and of another to morrow. Too many of these fortune-worshippers there are among Christian professors, that are resolv'd to cut, not their garments only, but their religion of the fashion too; that, like butter-flies, flutter up and down with their painted wings while the Summer holds; but, when once Winter comes, their activity is at an end, and we see no more of them. What Religion soever they profess, 'tis because their worldly interest or alliances sway them to it. Which way soever they steer, 'tis because the wind blows that way. It is storied of the *Chameleon*, that he can change himself into any colour, but white and red; according to the colour of the ground he standeth on: and *Aristotle* tells us, that the reason is the aerial constitution of his body, being a transparent substance, puff up with wind. Such are the time-servers and self-seekers among Professors, their Religion is always that which is uppermost, be it what it will, *Regis ad exemplum, &c.* This proceeds from their emptiness and the

the rottenness of their principles; they are puffed up with a flatuous inconstancy, they make a noise like an empty vessel or tinkling cymbal; but that's all: they will talk of grace, boast of knowledge, glory in their faith, and zeal, and good works, &c. are all for tongue and an empty profession; so that their religion being nothing else but a wind, no wonder that it shift from point to point, according as the exhalation that breeds and feeds it shall happen to be reverberated from above. They are such as the Apostle speaks of, *1 Tim. 6. 5. Supposing that gain is godliness.* They have no other rule to chuse their religion by, but their own private interest. One religion, ordinarily, serves their turns, as well as another, so that it do but answer this end: but as for religion in it self, they care no more for it, than *Judas* did for the poor; let them feed or famish, he would lay it little to heart, so he might but fill his belly and his bag. *Sirs!* take heed that none of you be rank'd at last of God among his summer-friends, that could court him, while the world would court you for his sake; but can forsake and deny him, if once they begin to buffet you. If you be not found at last to have been of God's religion, and that of hearty choice, let the wind of the times blow which way'twill; it will be better you had been of no religion at all. When we consider the sharp conflicts that some of the



former generations have pass'd through in finishing their testimonies, we may say to you with the Apostle to the Hebrews, *Heb. 12. 4. Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.* God only knows how soon you may be called so to do. 'Tis time to chuse, and to be resolved what religion to live and die in, if it be yet to chusing.

*Dir. 21. 21. In doubtful cases take the surest way, though a lion be in it.* He that acts doubtingly, acts presumptuously; for however the case prove in the issue, or whatsoever it be in it self, while it doth not appear, there is intolerable presumption and contempt of sacred authority. For as far as he acts with a doubting conscience, he casts off the fear of God, mocks his conscience, and even resolves to adventure on the wrath of God, and the loss of his soul, and to run on, be it duty or sin, heaven or hell, be God pleased or displeased, honour'd or dishonour'd. Now though it should happen to be the right way, that he thus presumptuously and ignorantly adventur'd on; yet no thanks to him; the sin of his presumption is never the less. Therefore, *He that doubteth is damned if he eat*, Rom. 10. 23. Well then, when two or more ways lie before you, and they all seem to be equally probable, that you know not whether to chuse; ask your own reason, what course you ought to take. Will it not tell you, that you were best to make a stand a while,

while, and consider the danger that lies in this uncertainty? To lose your way is to lose your souls; for the race that you are to run is for eternity; and when once you are engag'd in a false way, it will be hard to turn out of it, and the harder to find the right way. And will not reason tell you too, that you were not best to trust your own judgments in a matter of such consequence? but to enquire of those that are better skill'd in the way? If you hearken to the flesh or to the world, those will tell you that the pleasanter and broadest way, wherein most walk, and which makes most for your private interest is your way; therefore to consult with these is dangerous. The first great difficulty lies in getting true direction; for Satan hath, as it were, plac'd his agents at every cross-way and by-lane, on purpose to turn passengers out of the right way; and thousands of plausible tricks they have, with fair words and shews of reason and religion, to deceive the ignorant and unstable. Now what shall the poor traveller do in this streight, but first go and spread his case before God, and humbly beg the counsel of his Spirit, whose office it is to guide his people into all truth? *John 16.13.* and then to search the Scriptures, whose direction is infallible, if rightly understood; for your help wherein, the advice of those, whom God hath given among men for this use, must be taken, all

selfishness and partiality carefully abandoned, and all circumstances duly weighed and considered. And observe, that when two ways are thus before thee, ordinarily that which is best pleasing to the flesh, and most opposite to the way that most are walking in, is thy way. But it is true, the greater part of people make shorter work on't; they have a clew of self-love and private interest which quickly helps them out of all these *Labyrinths*. If a duty comes attended with some difficulties, trouble, or persecution, and conscience gives, it may be, some secret intimations that it ought not to be balked or slighted, carnal reason, under the name of Christian prudence, begins to play the sophister, like *Husbai*, though to worse purpose, *The counsel is not good at this time*. These and these circumstances of danger, disadvantage, disgrace, &c. alter the nature, and remit the obligation of the duty: every precept doth not bind *ad semper*; that which is a duty at one time, may not be so at another: self-preservation is one law of pure nature; but the laws of God are not destructive of the laws of nature. With such kind of sophistications, duty is eluded, and the poor deceived soul goes on boldly to the chambers of death. Sirs! engrave this truth upon the tables of your hearts, that no suffering or persecution whatsoever, simply, and of it self, can alter the nature, or dispence with the obligation

tion of any moral duty. Nay, your life and safety is bound up with your duty, though fire and faggot, and all the miseries of this life do at present attend it. Therefore when thou comest to a doubtful case, and findest some inward hesitations about it, do not say with *Alexander* concerning the *Gordian knot*, *Nihil interest quomodo solvatur, modo solvatur.* *Quint. Curt. l. 3.* 'Tis no matter how the case be resolved, so it be done in favour of the worldly interest. But though earth and hell conspire to way-lay and oppose thee, resolve to sit down and suffer whatever come on't, rather than adventure one foot farther than thy conscience, on the best information thou canst attain to, is free to go hand in hand with thee.

22. *Take heed of walking in a ring.* Let *Dir. 22.* your motion be direct, not circular. Between non-proficients and Back-sliders there's no *medium*, the condition of grace being herein unlike that of nature, admitting no degree of consistency between *growing* and *decaying*. You may not certainly judge of your progress by your profession, no, nor by your zeal neither; for there is many times the greatest outward zeal, where there is the least inward sincerity. He, whose duties and devotions run in a ring, acts not for God, but for himself; either, as an *Olympian gamester*, for the applause and respects of men; or as a horse in a mill, that grinds for the *mill*. And it is no wonder

*Pemb. Vind. Grak. p. 4.*

der to see men thus principled, like *Jebu*, to drive furiously. A selfish zeal will make a fair shew, when exercis'd about religious duties and concernments on base ends. Circular motions are the swiftest. *Petitio principii* is a fallacy in *Logick*, and so it is in practical *Divinity*. 'Tis true, the work of a Christian is like that of the Husbandman, which goes round with the year; every day and season brings its proper work; though he hath time to eat, and drink, and sleep, yet no time to be idle; but according to the *Egyptian Hieroglyphick*, one earing and harvest being over, another begins in the same method, and to the work goes round. Thus it becomes a Christian to serve out his generation, and, being the *light of the world*, to course, as it were, from *Cancer* to *Capricorn*, through all the signs of the *Zodiack*, the duties both of the first and second Table, according to their proper times and seasons. I abhor the real *Phanaticism* of those, that, to avoid customariness in religion, affect nothing but novelties, and ramble eccentrick from one opinion to another, till they arrive to perfect *Atheism*. This is a progression that leads apace to the kingdom of darkness; one of the shortest *cuts* to hell. But yet there is a circular motion in religion, which is altogether as destructive; when men rest in the bodily labour, and drive on a formal trade of sinning and repenting, of washing and wallowing again, like



like that adulteress, *that eateth, and wipeth her mouth, and saith, I have done no wickedness*, Prov. 30. 20. Or like the besotted Papist, that, being once shriven, accounts himself free to run into a new score, and return to his former lewdness; and then, to make amends for this, will be shriven again, and so goes on in his old course still; who say in effect, that their prayers and duties are their propitiatory sacrifices to justify all their ungodliness, and therefore are so zealous to multiply them. What is this, but to mock with God and with conscience, and to trample the blood of Christ under foot as an unholy and worthless thing, and make a mere formality, a pageantry and mock-shew of the externals of religion? Neither be ye any of those that run from duty to duty, and from ordinance to ordinance, and get nothing but the dry husks of a few fruitless notions, and rest in what they have done; that do *magno conatu nihil agere*, take a world of pains to do nothing. Now to prevent this non-proficiency, you must be the more frequent, serious and impartial in reflecting on and examining of your selves concerning your spiritual growth, both as to the quantity, quality and proportion of it. Have you sown your field or garden, and will you not observe how the seed springs and thrives after you? and whether it be the seed or the weed that grows most? Why Sirs! are not your souls of as

great a value as your fields? would you not wonder at the madness of such an Husbandman, as should always be plowing and sowing on a barren rock, and never take any course or care that his labour and charge may prosper? Oh be not guilty of as great a madness in a spiritual case. Do not travel to and fro, and run adventures to worship God together, as those that are prodigal of their labour and time, and liberties, and estates, and yet get nothing to recompence these expences. Of those many thousands that pretend to run heaven-ward, how few are there that run forward? Besides those that sit still and content themselves with what they seem to have gotten; and those that turn aside to false ways under fair colours; and those that professedly set their faces the wrong way; and those that run in a round, returning still to the same point; how very few are there that make it their design in earnest to press toward the mark; that are growing root and branch, and getting ground; and that make it their aim and work so to do.

*Dir. 23. 23. What God hath wrought in thee, and what faith hath wrought in God for thee, hold fast; thy crown, thy soul lies at stake. Hath God enlightened thee? take heed of putting out or shutting up that light. Hath he in any measure awaked thy conscience? take heed of relapsing into a spiritual lethargy. Hath he wrought any inclinations in thy will, or kind-*

led

led and blown up the coals of affection? take heed of growing cold, or luke-warm. Hath he given thee any strength or victory against sin? take heed of growing secure, or giving the least advantage to a conquered enemy. Hath thy faith fastned on Christ? strengthen thy cable and anchor, and keep up faith in the lively, clear, and vigorous actings of it. Hath it evidenced to thee the happiness of thy spiritual estate, and thereby suggested matter of peace and joy? Hold fast then what thou hast gotten: there are many that will ail at thee; and do their utmost to pervert thee: Satan, be sure, will have a quarrel at thee; and if possible, be too hard for thee. He will chuse the darts of his temptations according to thy constitution, interest, calling, company, external condition, &c. For a covetous *Achan* he hath a *wedge of gold*, and a goodly *Babylonish garment*. For the idolatrous *Danites*, an *Ephod*, and *Teraphim*, and a *carved image*. For ambitious, hypocritical *Jehu*, the advantage of getting a *Kingdom*. For the vain-glorious *Pharisee*, the praise and admiration of men. For a traiterous and covetous *Judas*, thirty pieces of silver, an opportunity to ingratiate himself with the great ones, and a fair way to dissemble his treason by a complementive kiss. The Devil knows how to make thee savoury meat, such as thou lovest, and how to bait his hook according to the season, and the kind of fish

*Josh. 7. 21.*

*Judg. 12. 18.*

Hh 5

that

that he angles for. His snare is always ready, his arrow is on the string; he sometimes adventures on you flying, as on the woman, Rev. 12. 14, 15. but if once you fall and begin to feed securely on creature-pleasures; or get to perch on the boughs of pride and self-conceit, then look to it, he hath his stedy aim at you. *Put on therefore the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the Devil. For we wrestle not [or not only] against flesh and blood, but against principalities and powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places,* Ephes. 6. 11, 12. Sirs! if you will own Christ for the captain of your salvation, you must resolve to abide the issue of the field, and stick to your profession in spight of opposition. And remember by the way, that Satan's strength lies much in our weakness, and our weakness in our unwatchfulness. Therefore *be sober, be vigilant, because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about seeking whom he may devour,* 1 Pet. 5. 8. Vigilancy is the only way to victory. Beware of whatsoever may prove an occasion of a snare to you. Trust not a *Delilah* with your seven locks, lest the Philistines, by that means, over-match you. Take heed of wavering or halting in judgment or practise; be not like the *Samaritans*, that pretended to fear the Lord, but served their idols, 2 Kings 17. 33. *Let us hold*

fast the profession of our faith without wavering, Heb. 10. 23. Beware of *Laodicea's* temper, neither hot nor cold; of resting in almost a *Christian*; or sitting down at half way. What you want in strength, labour to make up in steadfastness; keep on in an even course, though you can't run as fast as some others, yet be always pressing on; *Nulla dies sine linea*, every day doing something: and you may find the proverb true in a spiritual sense, that *Light gains make a heavy purse*. 'Tis an easie matter to run the first half-way to heaven, that is, as far as a bare profession, an historical faith, a negative righteousness and civil conversation comes to. But the internal and spiritual part of Christianity is harder work: the subduing of the will, the crucifying of the affections, the denying of self, these things are not so easie. Now the harder the work is, the more pitty it is that it should go back after it is once hopefully begun. Hold it fast then and hold it on.

I. *Against the inclinations of the flesh.* This cowardly treacherous heart will be ever and anon drawing back: *Eve's* mouth will be watering on forbidden fruit; the flesh is tender, full of touchy humours, and apt to be offended: it is wanton, foolish and selfish, and without strict discipline, will not be kept under any tolerable *decorum*. Therefore the Apostle takes so severe a course with himself,

I Cor.



υποτασσέμενος  
subicio velu-  
tantiem.

υποτασσέ-  
μαι sunt  
αδελφούς  
οφθαλ-  
μους πλη-  
ρου. Eu-  
itath.

1 Cor. 9. 27. *I keep under my body, ὑποτάσσω, I knock it down, and suppress all the irregular lustrings of it. I deal with it as some masters are forc'd to deal with refractory servants, that are ready to take head and rise against them : I leave the marks of my blows upon it, and make it go with a black eye (as the word seems to signifie) as the badge of its stubbornness : I keep it like a captive slave, that it may not dare to move nor mutter against me : should I pamper it, there would be no ruling it ; therefore I keep it low, and bring it into subjection, δαλαγωγῶ. I make it my servant ( for the truth is, it is very unworthy & unfit to be master) lest by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a cast-away. Some of the strongest temptations are wont to issue from hence, therefore here must the strictest guard be set. When the flesh endeavours to charm thee with the cry of reason or religion, see thou believe it not, till thou hast duly examined by what spirit and rule it is acted ; for the flesh is wont to look through false glasses, and to represent things quite otherwise than they are ; and that which seems right in thine own eyes, or conducive to thy beloved interest will hardly be suspected.*

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note

2. *Against the instigations of Satan.* The Devil will observe how thy byass leans, and how the ground lies, that he may play his game with the greater advantage. He will raise

raise foes without and fiends within, if by any means he may hurry thee from thy station; which way soever the temptation comes, whatever be the occasion or the instruments, 'tis a thousand to one but Satan hath, first, or last, an hand in it. Though the flesh be through grace truly mortified, yet it being but in part, he will raise it up as a ghost to terrifie and discompose thee, and to make new work still for repentance; for Satan never strives more than when he is losing ground most. The dying beast bites sharpest: The critical paroxysms of a disease are the most violent. The child of God hath many times, through the malice of Satan, more to do with a mortally wounded lust, (as the *Romans* once had, with the half-destroyed *Carthage*) than when it was untouched. Be sure, hold fast both thy confidence and thy comforts against the least sprawls of thy dying enemy. The Devil is like some eager gamesters, the more they lose the deeper they play: be not ignorant of his devises.

*Plus Romae  
negotii fuit  
cum senarica  
Carthagine,  
quam cum in-  
reges. Flor.*

3. *Against the examples of men, of what grace, learning, parts, degrees or profession soever.* Make no mans opinion or practice your rule, but his who was both God and man. The best of men are but men, and in some cases their examples are most dangerous. The Apostle himself would not be followed by others, further than he followed Christ, *1 Cor. II. 1.* Take heed of those that *Proteus*-like, can trans-

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transform themselves into any shape, according to the temper of the times they live in, that they may keep up their interest in the world, and their reputation among men. Be you like the fixed Poles of heaven, though all set a running round about you, keep you your stations; though all men forsake thee, says *Peter*, yet will not I; which indeed was well resolv'd, had it been as well perform'd. Multitude in sinning is no excuse, *Argumentum turpissimum est turba*, says *Seneca*. It is for brutes to follow the herd, not for rational creatures: he that is concern'd for eternity had need walk by a surer rule, and not judge of his way by the number of the passengers. *Chuse you this day whom you will serve* (says *Josbua*) *but as for me and my house, we will serve the Lord*, Josh. 24. 15.

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4. *Against the reproaches, slanders and censures you may meet with, and that not only from open enemies, but from false friends too.* Herein you must expect to follow your brethren, that have gone before you, if you mean to walk in their steps and to own their cause. If *Luther*, that morning-star of Reformation, will shew his zeal for the kingdom of Christ, he shall have, not only the whole kennel of *Roman* blood-hounds, but that ungodly Sect of *Anabaptists* and others to bark at him. Holy *Athanasius* shall not escape the slanders and persecutions of the *Arrians*, nor learned and pain-

painful *Calvin* the bitter invectives of *Servetus* and many others. Our Saviour himself must be accus'd for a glutton and a wine-bibber, for a blasphemer, a deceiver and an enemy to *Cæsar*; his Apostles for Hereticks, madmen and movers of sedition, and their successors in all ages branded with the reproachful nick-names of Night-revellers, Lollards, Hugonots, Puritans, Phanaticks, or any thing that malice can invent to represent them vile and odious to the world. This is part of what thou must look for here in this life, if thou wilt be a Christian; therefore hold fast faith and a good conscience against all these, that thou mayest never want that testimony within, that may sweeten all to thee.

5. *Against the persecutions of the world.* Though they knock thy fingers, be sure thou do not let go thy hold. Be not like the *Stars* under the sixth seal, *Rev. 6. 13.* or like the *Fig-tree*, that casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. Fear none of these things which thou shalt suffer, *Rev. 2. 10.* Persecution is God's *razor*, as *David* calls it, *Psal. 52. 2.* which is to fit his *Nazarites* for their eternal separation, both from sin and suffering; it is a *razor* which takes off only our superfluities; a wind which blows off only our dust and chaff; a fire, which consumes and separates the dross. Be not like the stony-ground-seed, that could not endure the Sun.

Let

5.

*Neoculus  
non admitti-  
tur nisi ad su-  
perflua no-  
stra. Aug.  
in loc.*

Pezel. Mel-  
lis. hfl.

Tossan. in  
loc.

A Deo etiam  
tribulatio be-  
neficium est &  
donum Dei  
admirationis.  
Aug. ep. ad  
Hel. & Rust.

Let the world deal never so unjustly or ungratefully, as the *Hebrew* did with *Moses*, *Exod.* 2. 14. or as *David's* enemies dealt with him, *Psal.* 69. or as *Lenas* dealt with *Cicero*, or *Magnentius* with *Constans*, who requited the saving of their own lives with the murder of them that saved them. When a Christian suffers most wrongfully he suffers most gloriously, --- *The spirit of glory and of God resteth upon you*, 1 Pet. 4. 14. And this is thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully, 1 Pet. 2. 19. This is thankworthy. τὸ τοῦ ὁ χάρις. for this is grace. *Laus*, sive *peculiare donum*. It is *gratia gratum faciens*, acceptable with God, as it is translated, *ver.* 20. though it be not that which profits him, or merits any thing with him; yet it is that which pleases him. Again, it is *gratia gratis data*, a favour of God to be honoured with such suffering: *For unto you it is given, in the behalf of Christ, not only to believe on him, but also to suffer for his sake*, Phil. 1. 29. Therefore *martyrdom* was accounted and called a *crown*, which the primitive Saints rejoiced that they were accounted worthy of, *Acts.* 5. 41. Again, hold fast, be it never so cruel. *Nullum violentum diu*. The rougher the storm, the sooner it is over. In the *Mount* God will be seen. If the *furnace* be heated seven times hotter than ordinary, then is the time for the Son of God to appear. Oh with  
what



what heroick gallantry of spirit have the blessed Saints of God marched through the flames, as in their triumphal chariots into glory, to the terror of their enemies, the admiration of spectators, and the encouragement of their weak brethren? so that some have confessed that they could have found in their hearts to have died with them: and their very persecutors have been convinc'd, and confessed, that burning them was not the way to suppress them. *For as the sufferings of Christ abound in us, says the Apostle) so our consolation also aboundeth by Christ,* 2 Cor. i. 5. Nay, hold fast, let thy sufferings seem never so long. The longest time thou canst suffer here is but a moment to eternity: Oh how soon will all be forgotten when it is once past? If we look forward on a few years, it seems long; but look back and it seems short. Thy patience cannot be approved without its perfect work. God is wont to do his people the greatest good by the greatest evils. Observe, the Apostle doth not say, that your faith only, but the tryal of your faith is more precious than that of gold, 1 Pet. i. 7. not only precious faith, but precious tryals. Take heed then you be not like those painted dishes that will not hold scouring.

*Plures officium quoties metimur à vobis. Tert.*

*See Leigh's Saints Encour.*

6. *Against the flatteries of the world.* Fear and hope (as I have told you) are the two great springs of the souls motions, the one

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to

to drive, the other to draw. Look to it here, these are the *corde of a man*, which are wont to hold, when many times the *corde of God* are broken and cast away. Take heed of turning aside, or stooping down to finger those golden apples that may be cast in your way. Remember what is the price of your high calling, your souls lie at stake; a little stop in your race may occasion the loss of all. When Sir *Anthony Kingstone* came to Bishop *Hooper* a little before his martyrdom to turn him from the Faith, he used this argument, *Life is sweet and death bitter*, to whom he stedfastly replied, *Ay, but the death to come is more bitter, and the life to come more sweet*. How unsavory and unapt to tempt are the sweets of this life, to a soul, that hath once tasted those of the life to come? *Contemptus est à me Romanus & favor & furor*, says *Luther*, I value neither their favour nor their fury.

7. *7. Against the persuasions and solicitations of friends.* How famous is the known example of that noble *Caracciolum* in this case? with what unbiass'd and heroick zeal did he break through the hard and close siege of the cries and tears of his dear wife and beloved children? and the arguments of his nearest relations and friends, that he might follow Christ, and hold fast the profession of his faith without wavering? And how have many of the

the blessed martyrs been beset and put hard to it this way? and yet have with an impregnable resolution broken through all, remembering the first terms of their initiation, *Luke 14. 26. If any man come to me, and hate not his father, and mother, and wife, and children, and brethren, and sisters, yea and his own life also, he cannot be my disciple.* Sirs! these are cases that will try on what foundation you have built; whether the rock or the sand, and of what metal you are, whether pure gold, or reprobate silver. Be sure you hold fast.

8. *Against the cunning sophistry of men of perverse minds.* Satan will raise up such, that by these, if possible, he may beat thee out of the faith. Arm thy self with the clear apprehension of Scripture-truth in the pure and naked simplicity of it. Do not intangle thy brains in doubtful questions, nor believe every thing that hath the fair appearance of reason in it. Thorowly study the principles of thy Christian-belief, and acquaint thy self with the word of God, that thou mayest be able to contend earnestly for the faith, and to stop the mouth of gain-sayers, as many of the poor, and otherwise contemptible & unlearned servants of Christ have done. Famous to this purpose is that of one *Alice Driver*, a Martyr in *Q. Maries* days, who in her examination on the real presence of Christ's humane nature in the

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Sacrament, so shamefully put the Doctor and her learned adversaries to silence, that they looked on one another, and had not a word to say: whence she begins to triumph. *What* (says shee) *have you no more to say, God be thanked, you are not able to resist the Spirit of God in a poor woman. I was an honest poor man's daughter, never brought up to the University, as you have been; but have driven the plough before my father many a day, yet in the defence of God's truth, and of my Master Christ, by his grace, I will set my foot against the foot of any of you all, in the maintenance and defence of the same: And if I had a thousand lives, they should all go for payment thereof. Or if it may be thou canst not hold in disputation, yet hold fast in affection and resolution with that other holy martyr, that baffled her enemies thus: Though I cannot dispute for the truth, yet I can die for the truth.*

9. *Against the injurious impositions and usurped power of men.* Men invested with lawful authority, may, and too often do exercise their authority to the prejudice of Christianity. In this case, God must be obeyed and not men, *Acts 5. 29.* Let *Cæsar* by all means, have that which is due to *Cæsar*, but then let God have his right too. The three children were loyal enough to the king of *Babylon*, yet in a matter that concern'd the king of heaven they are peremptory. *Be it known unto thee, O King,*

*King, that we will not serve thy gods, nor worship thy golden image which thou hast set up,* Dan. 3. 18. They did (as *Grofthead* once told the *Pope*) obediently disobey. Men may make laws that concern men as men, but God alone can give laws to the conscience.

10. *Against the loud cry and pretence of antiquity, and practices of fore-fathers, or authority of the Church.* Though antiquity be venerable for its gray hairs, yet antiquity without verity or piety is but hoary-headed iniquity. We must not look what others did before us (says *Cyprian*) but what Christ did before them all. The law of *Divorce* could plead antiquity, yea, and some kind of authority, and so could *Polygamy* too; but from the beginning (says Christ) it was not so, Mat. 19. 8.

10.  
Non attendendum quid alii ante nos fecerint, sed quid Dominus qui ante omnes. Cyp. Ep. de Lucif.

That which is evil, the older it is, the worse. And as for the Church, what is its authority? but to declare the laws of the great King, and to see them executed, as far as it concerns her own proper policy. Though in matters indifferent shee may direct and command what is naturally and apparently necessary for order and decency; yet so, as Christian liberty be not infringed, though in some cases it may be restrained. She is the pillar and ground of truth indeed, 1 Tim. 3. 15. but it is *sensu forensi, non architectonico*, to hold forth and publish the laws of God to the world, as the *Pillar* doth the Kings declaration for its promulgation.

Veritatem celestem fideliter custodit et assertat. Vile. Schol. in loc.



Atque Paulus  
affirmaret ve-  
ritatem doc-  
trinae Chri-  
stianae pen-  
dere à iudicio  
Ecclesiae. 1b.

on and preservation; but not as if the verity or authority of Christian doctrine did depend on the judgment or sentence of the Church, as the Papists falsely affirm. Hold fast now against all these, and whatever else may attempt to beat thee off from Christ.

Dir. 24. 24. *Let piety and morality embrace and beautify each other, as the two Cherubims on the Mercy-seat. Oh! let it never be said, that Religion, in the strictness of it, makes bad subjects, or bad neighbours. We have to do with a generation, that are wont to judge of the things and people of God according to their subserviency to, or consistency with their own private worldly interests; from a defect in the second Table, they will conclude your atheism or hypocrisy in the first. Though mere morality be unto divinity, but as a brute to a man; yet remember, that as the rational soul includes the animal, so doth your duty towards God always include that towards man. Sublata pietate tollitur fides, & vice versa. These two are the Castor and Pollux, which if they appear single, and not in their happy and due conjunction, always bode ill both to the credit and interest of Religion. We trust we have a good conscience in all things* (says the Apostle) *willing to live honestly,* Heb. 13. 18. *to lead a fair, honest and upright conversation, to live, not only religiously towards God, but honestly towards men. And herein*

αγαλῶς  
ἀνὰ σέβας  
ᾠδοῦμεν

*do I exercise my self to have always a conscience void of offence towards God and towards men,*  
*Acts 24. 16.* Sirs, the honour of God is very much concern'd in your carriage towards those that are without, therefore *Give none offence to the Jews, nor to the Gentiles, nor to the Church of God,* 1 Cor. 10. 32. Now observe, the greatest offence that any one is apt to take, is in the matter of his God; but 'tis the world that is the worldlings god; though it may be they are asham'd notionally to own it. Touch them in this, and you were as good rob a hive of Bees at noon day; or the *Ephesians* of their *Diana*. Therefore let your integrity and plainness of heart and behaviour in all your dealings and commerces with them be such, as may convince them, that godliness in the height of it is no way prejudicial, but accumulative, yea, the crown and perfection of morality: Let them see that you dare not lye and defraud and over-reach; that you dare not give up the reins to your lusts and passions, nor allow your selves in that peevish, sullen morosity, back-biting, contention or revenge, which becomes not your profession and relation to the God of love; but that you can heartily and readily forgive; as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. Oh how many are there in the world that cast dirt and mire in the face of their profession by their immoralities and unchristian-like deport-

ment in Second-table duties ; walking one foot forward and another backward : pretending a zeal for Religion and high devotion towards God , but by this means pull down with one hand what they would seem to build with the other. Surely such religion is vain, and gives very palpable symptomes of rottenness at the bottom : or at least discovers very weak measures of mortification. I could enlarge here, but that I have already run far beyond the bounds I at first determined.

*Dir. 25. 25. Maintain a close communion with God.* Believe it, you will quickly lose your way, if you cannot see God in your way. God leads his people now (though in a more spiritual manner) as of old he led the *Israelites*, by the cloudy pillar of his presence : as that mov'd so they were to move, and no otherwise, both by day and by night, *Exod. 13. 21*. Through all hazzards and discouragements, and under the obscurest dispensations, this was their *Pilot*. Thus did the Lord go before them and lead them in the way , and chose their inheritance for them ; and indeed it was well for them that he did so. He was as a wall of fire round about them, a light towards them for their direction and comfort, and a pillar of darkness on their enemies to defeat them. Therefore, says *Moses*. *If thy presence go not with me, carry us not up hence*, *Exod. 33. 15*. The presence of God is the life of his people, by  
virtue

virtue of communion with him, they receive influence from him, both of counsel, strength and comfort. God is the eye of his people for direction, and that in the most difficult cases. *I will instruct thee and teach thee, in the way which thou shalt go; I will guide thee with mine eye,* Psal. 32. 8. He is their strength and their right hand. *The Lord is my strength and my shield; my heart trusted in him and I am helped,* Psal. 28. 7. He is the life of all their comforts, and as it were, the resurrection from the dead, as the bones of *Elijah* to the dead man that was cast into his Sepulcher, *as soon as he touched the bones of the Prophet, he revived and stood upon his feet,* 2 Kings 13. 21. Communion with God is as life from the dead under the severest providences. Oh the glorious and unutterable joy that flows from hence! when the poor soul walks with his heavenly Father, as his companion in all his tribulations. Oh the marrow and fatness that it fills his bones with! Oh the heaven that it elevates the poor heart into: nothing is wanting where God is present; he hath a full measure of spiritual joy, pressed down, shaken together and running over. Alas! what empty ciphers and cold insignificant characters are the words of frail men to express these things of God? Oh that Christians were more sensible of their loss by letting down communion with God? Keep close to him, he is thy shield and thy buckler,

thy safety, and thy glory : be not like *Orpah*, but like *Ruth*, cleave unto the Lord as she did to *Naomi*, with an irrefragable resolution. Say with the *Roman* spouse, *Ubi tu Cajus, ibi ego Cajo*. Spend not a day, nor an hour without him : walk with him, work with him, eat with him, lie down with him, take him for thine inseparable companion in all that thou undertakest. Art thou called to a prison, to a dungeon ? God with thee will make the nastiest pit a pleasant palace to thee [from the delectable orchard of *Leonine* prison, says *Alyerius*] Art thou called to fire and faggot ? God with thee will make thy flames as a bed of roses. Art thou banish'd into a strange land ? God with thee will make thy *Patmos* the place of most glorious and heavenly revelations ; he will sweeten all, and sanctifie all, and make up all to thee. Are the *Nymphs* (as the Poets feign) content to live on a naked rock for the love of a pleasant river ? and is there not enough in God himself, the everlasting rock, to sweeten all the crosses and sufferings of this lower world, in whose presence are rivers of joy ? Oh Sirs ! keep in with God, hold up that heavenly fellowship, which is the great conduit of all gracious influences from the head and fountain of all : keep in with him, and then his spirit shall be your spirit, his graces your graces, his victories your victories, and his glory your glory.

*Quippe traditum est Nymphas amore amnis rebus in illa rupe considere.*  
*Quint. Curt.*  
*l. 3.*



26. *Gird on thy holy resolution with solemn* Dir. 26.  
*and frequent vow and covenant.* Resolution  
of it self is like a light and loose garment,  
which is easily blown off, unless it be well girt  
on. *Vow and pay unto the Lord your God, Psal.*  
*76. 11.* And this rule the Prophet himself re-  
solves to observe, *Psal. 119. 106. I have sworn,*  
*and I will perform it, that I will keep thy right-*  
*eous judgments.* An oath, though it be but in  
things pertaining unto men, hath ever been  
held in sacred reverence and observance even  
among civiliz'd heathens; though in this Je-  
suid age of ours, vows and covenants have  
almost forfeited their credit, and signifie but  
little: yet *Solomon* makes this one character  
of a child of God, *to fear an oath, Eccles. 9. 2.*  
unless *Gejermus* his criticism (which methink is *Synops. in hoc.*  
too harsh) must be rather admitted, who makes  
the fearing of an oath to be the sin, opposing  
it to the worshipping of God by a religious  
oath or vow. However, be it so, yet it cannot  
be denied, but that the wise man intimates  
here, that a child of God is one that makes  
conscience of his oath, whether made to God  
or to man; and certainly, where it is rightly  
managed and duly executed, it is of very hap-  
py use and efficacy. As for national covenant-  
ing I shall not here meddle with, the bare  
mention of it is enough to make us all to  
blush. But that which I would now urge is  
what lies within every ones own reach; that  
every

p. 365.

every soul would for himself and his own house, solemnly and stedfastly engage on a speedy and thorow reformation both of heart and life. This, I am sure, is no more than is both lawful and needful; which I think (putting aside *Atheists* and *Quakers*) there are but few that will question. I might offer you some encouragement to this from the examples of those holy ones, that have gone before you, and from the blessed success of it. Certainly I know no way in the world more effectual to engage God to a person or people, or to engage them to God, than this solemn and serious covenanting with him. As for the matter and form of this covenant in general, I refer you to that heavenly Treatise of Mr. *R. Aleine*, entitled, *Heaven opened*, where about the end, you may find the sum of the new Covenant on mans part drawn into a full and patheticall form by Mr. *J. A.* But that which I aim at here, is a particular covenanting or vowing to the Lord on special occasions, or the particular application of the more general covenant in the several parts or branches of it, as occasions shall require. Now as to this, I shall only suggest these few things. First, set some time daily apart, solemnly to inspect and reflect on your selves, and to consider in what respects you fail, and have need of reformation, either as to heart or life, in omission or commission, in the matter, or in the manner of  
your

your duties. Having found out something amiss, as doubtless it will be no very hard matter to do, if you are never so little serious; consider then what the properest course is in order to an effectual reformation. Having discovered this, reduce it unto a fixed and practical resolution; and then fall down before the all-seeing and merciful God, and spread this covenant before him. Tell him that you are convinc'd of these and these things, and bless him for convincing you; tell him that you are asham'd to remember how often you have broken covenant and mock'd with him; and yet, while the day of your visitation holds, and there is a hope before you, the golden scepter of the Gospel being still held forth, you are once more willing, in all humility and sincerity to return to him, to beg mercy of him, and to renew your broken covenant with him, and especially in those particular respects, wherein, on impartial examination, you have found the greatest breaches. And above all things, be sure you have still an especial eye at your bosom-lust, which hath so many thousand ways to shift from you, and such a wardrobe of masks and veils to dissemble in. Observe it, not only in the *imperate*, but in the *elicit* acts of it; not only in its branches, but in its root, that which none but God and conscience is privy to. Resign up your selves, your persons, your interests, your all unto God,

God, propriety in, possession of, and dominion over all, which is but his right; and let it be on due deliberation and full perswasion, that you may not, *after vows make enquiry*, but it may be a *Covenant of salt*, as was that of *David*, 2 *Chron.* 13. 5. To this end, let your covenant be absolute, not conditional, *i. e.* let there be no *If's* or *And's* in it. *Hypothetica nihil ponunt in esse.* 'Tis true, we may resolve on nothing in our own strength, for we can do nothing, but through Christ that strengthneth us; but when we form our resolutions thus, that so and so we will do, as God shall enable us, or if God please to strengthen, the words are good, yet all the while, the heart is not fully purposed, nor the difficulties of the work counted on, nor the necessity of it convincingly apprehended, nor these resolutions or promises well minded afterward; what do we, but interpretatively charge God with all the breaches of our resolutions. Again, let them be for present execution, and not procrastinated to a future time, which hath been the ruine of so many thousands of good inclinations and purposes. Hath God brought thy convictions to resolution? be sure thou strike while the iron is hot, now is thy time to form it into a practical habit; if thou let thy heart grow cold again, it will grow harder than ever. Again, let it be of things within your reach and capacity, and which

*Sal duraturae  
amicitiae  
symbolum.*

which may not be destructive to necessary bodily comforts, nor obstructive to any other duty, that God requires of you, lest you run your selves into the guilt of an abominable superstition, which is the course of some, whose zeal is too hard for their knowledge. Again, let them be of particulars, and not of generals, lest by grasping too wide you lose all, as many do that pretend, at least, to resolve, it may be promise to lead a new life, but fix on no particulars, which is as senseless and vain an attempt, as if a man should go about to raise up the whole work and frame of a city at one lift, and not lay on one thing after another. Besides, as I said before, the covenantings we are now treating of, are but special branches and occasional renewals of that general covenant we entered into in our Baptism, in the particular parts of it. Again, whatsoever you are convinc'd of, either in respect of sin or of duty, go aside, and draw up a covenant on it between God and your own souls; which for better memory-sake, and to prevent the horrible sin of covenant-breaking, there are some that keep a notary or day-book by them, of those several things they have occasionally covenanted with God about; a practice (if done wisely and sincerely) lightly commendable and advantageous in this case. Lastly, let not the breaches of those thy covenants utterly overwhelm thee, nor drive thee into despair,



spair, either of obtaining pardon with God, or victory at last. 'Tis true, the case is sad, but yet not desperate. Satan will do his utmost, first for the breaking them, and then to tempt thee to cast all away as vain, and sad work. Many times, he makes this way: but know that a particular covenant may *de facto* be broken, while yet the general covenant holds good. However, be the oftner reviewing and renewing them; if they be broken, suffer them not to lie broken, and thou mayst find that these breaches, through thy wrestlings, and prayers, and repentings, and the help of the spirit of grace in thee, may tend to thy fuller conquest, and more abundant consolation.

*Dir. 27.* 27. *Take heed of an idol-worship.* Either the worship which is in it self an idol, as all humane inventions imposed as parts of divine worship are, or that teacheth or tendeth to idolatry. *Little children, keep your selves from idols,* 1 John 5. 21. both from idols and from idolatry, from all occasions and appearances of this evil. Let not the name of those idols, or idolatrous usages, whereby the worship of God hath been polluted, be mentioned or remembered by you, but with detestation. *And it shall be at that day, saith the Lord, that thou shalt call me Isbi, and shalt call me no more Baali: For I will take away the name of Baalim out of her mouth; and they shall be no more remembered by their name,* Hos. 2. 15, 16. God would

would have the very name and remembrance of all idolatrous customs to be raz'd from among his people. *Baali* was a good name, and proper to signify what God was to them, even *their Lord*, yet he abhors this name, because it had been given to their idol. If the *Brazen Serpent*, an image of God's own appointment, a glorious type of the blessed *Messiah*, one symbole of his gracious presence among his people, and the instrument of such miraculous help to them; if this once become an idol, away with it, break it in pieces, and call it no more *Nahash hannehosbeth*, the Brazen Serpent, but *Nehushtan*, a diminutive, *merum as*, vatab. in  
lu. mere brass, by way of contempt, *as & praeterea nihil*. Sirs ! it is the opinion of some, though, it may be, but an opinion, that the wound of the beast is yet to healing. I shall not now stand to examine how far the notion may be conceded; but however it be, Oh let none of us be found spreading the plaister for it. Remember, the Lord is a jealous God, especially in the matters of his worship: for 'tis observable that in the second Commandment only, which is that which respects instituted worship, he declares his jealousy unto the third and fourth generation; and this was one thing, which above all the rest, the *Jews* of old, by such variety of judgments so often smarted under. I shall not at present lead you round this large field, though I had

once a good mind to say a little more than time and place will now admit. Only remember to beware of that worship, that hath not the divine image and superscription upon it, the worship that is invented and imposed by men; that is not cloathed in the modest drels of pure Scripture-simplicity, but in the pompous attire of carnal ordinances and ceremonies, the proper badges of an harlot. *The kingdom of God cometh not with observation,* Luke 17. 20. Take heed of that worship that quenches or confines the Spirit, which ought to be free, both as to matter and mode, in all acts of Gospel-worship. Men may commit idolatry with words, as well as with wood or stone, or any other material. 'Tis not enough to direct your worship unto God, for so do idolaters too. But you must direct it in the way of his own appointment. Take heed of that worship that hath any mediator or sub-mediator besides the Lord Jesus Christ alone, and of those worshippers too, that would impose not only on your *Faith*, but on your very *Sences*; that if they say bread is flesh, or black is white, you must say so too. Whatever hath the least appearance of idolatry, superstition, or will-worship beware of. *What agreement hath the temple of God with idols? wherefore come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord,* 2 Cor. 6. 16, 17. Let not the false pleas of antiquity, decency,

cency, or loyalty deceive you. *To the law and to the testimony.* 'Tis not what the ancient, but κελευσιν  
what the primitive Churches have believed or νικη  
done, that must be our rule. Every thing less κενοφανής  
than primitive is novelty, and every novelty,  
says *Chrysostome*, is a vanity.

28. *Gird on the whole armor of God.* 'Tis Dir. 28.  
the Apostles advice, *Eph. 6. 11, &c.* Armour  
is for service, not for fight, but on the backs of  
cowards. Do not hang it loosely on, but gird  
it fast, that it may be for service. Be not con-  
tent with habits without the exercise, which is  
both the parent and the end of them. That  
habit is but an empty form that is not practi-  
cal. Arm your selves *Cap-a-pe* with the *hel-*  
*met* of salvation, the *breast-plate* of righteous-  
ness, the *shield* of faith, the *sword* of the spi-  
rit, the *shoe* of the preparation of the Gospel  
of peace. See that none of this be wanting,  
but thy Panoply entire, and then go forth in  
the name of the Lord, conquering and to con-  
quer. Stir up the gift of God that is in thee,  
as *Paul* once exhorted *Timothy*. Blow up the νικη  
coals of the graces of the spirit of God in πυρρην  
thee, raise them unto a flame. 'Tis not enough 2 Tim. 1. 6.  
that you have a lamp, though there be also oyl  
in it, but you must arise and trim it; nor is it  
the bare having a garment, but the wearing it  
that keeps you warm. Not to have and not to  
use are almost all one. 'Twas a noble resolution  
of *Alexander*, when he was environed by death

on every hand, both by the sicknesses of his body, and the sword of his approaching enemy, *Lenta remedia* (says he) & *segnes medicos non expectant tempora mea*, my present exigence cannot now wait on this lingring physick and dull physician; *vel mori strenue quam tarde convalescere mihi melius est*, 'tis better to die stoutly, than to recover slowly. Surely 'tis better to die for Christ, than to flie from him: to die fighting is to die conquering. But having many things yet to speak, and having already out-run my intended bounds, I must contract. Take this rule in the full latitude of it. Let it be the armour of God you take, and not of man; the whole armour of God, leave out never a piece, there is use for it all, both offensive and defensive; and then gird it on, buckle it fast, every piece in its place, that it may both sute and serve you.

29. 29. *Hold fast the truth both in the light and love of it.* It is become even a proverb among some; no matter of what judgment men be, so they be saints; but God will have this proverb to cease in his *Israel*. Truth in the judgment is as absolutely necessary to the constitution of a Christian, as holiness in the will, or strictness in the conversation. *Christ came to bear witness to the truth, John 18. 37. and every one that is of the truth heareth his voice.* Zeal without truth is the accursed incendiary of the Church of Christ in the world. I have told



told you already, that an error in judgment is wont to issue in practical errors. *If thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness*, Mat. 6. 23. Alexander was once a forward disciple, but having made shipwrack of the faith, he afterward became a persecutor, and the man that set on the multitude against Paul, Acts 19. 33. and became his bitter enemy, 2 Tim. 4. 14. Yea, none ordinarily grow more vile in point of manners, than those that have begun in apostacy from the truth. *The revolvers are profound to make slaughter*, Hos. 5. 2. Who among all the heathen tyrants, like the apostate Julian? therefore God gave up the Gentiles to vile affections, *because they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, and gave them over to a reprobate mind, to be filled with all unrighteousness, fornication, &c.* Rom. 1. 28, &c. Besides, error it self is down-stairs, if once you begin to tumble, 'twill be hard to stop, *erranti nullus terminus*; error runs in *infinitum*; sad experience is witness to this. Those that receive not the truth in that love, which is essential to engage them to hold it fast, God threatens to send them strong delusions, that they should believe a lye, 2 Thess. 2. 11. Open the door but to one error, and a thousand more will press in at the heels of it. *Therefore be no more children tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine by the slight of men and cunning craftiness,*

*whereby they lie in wait to deceive*, Ephes. 4. 14. Sirs ! you know not what subtil enemies you may yet meet with ; both *Hell* and *Rome*, with all their craft and wiles, are laying their heads together, that, if possible, they may deceive you. Those damnable errors and doctrines of devils, which yet you may seem to be at a good distance from, and well armed against, you know not how soon you may be, to your destruction inveigled with, if once you begin to let go the truth ; 'tis the truth that doth both make and keep you free, *John* 8. 32. yea, and steddyy too, which is as your *ballast* to preserve you from being tossed.

*Dir.* 30.

30. *Take special care of sanctifying the Lords day.* The loss of a Sabbath may prove the loss of thy soul. This is the great sinew of Religion ; if once you grow weary of Sabbaths, you will soon grow weary of your profession, or your profession weary of you, Sabbath-breaking is a sin that opens the flood-gates to all manner of licentiousness. How many such lamentable confessions might we record from the Gallows, that all those wickednesses, that brought those miscreants to their shameful ends, have begun in prophana-tion of the Lords day. Besides, it is a land-destroying sin. *Then shall the land enjoy her Sabbaths, as long as it lieth desolate, it shall rest, because it did not rest in your Sabbaths, when ye dwelt upon it, Lev. 26. 34, 35.* 'Tis not for

*Experientia  
docet, licenti-  
am & rerum  
sacrorum non  
aurantiam  
magis magis-  
que invale-  
scere, ubi dici  
Dominica ju-  
sta ratio non  
habetur. Am.  
Med. 1. c. 5.*

no-

nothing that Satan is such an enemy to this consecrated part of time, and hath raised such engines to explode the morality, and due sanctification of it. He hath found by experience what a bulwark it hath been against his interest in the world. It shall not be my work here to treat polemically of the morality of a seventh part of time, or the authentick and apostolical change of the day, or the hours of its beginning and ending: these things have been learnedly and clearly enough already handled by Dr. Young, Mr. Cowdrey and Palmer, Mr. Baxter, Mr. Hughs and Mr. Sheppard, and many others; though indeed I cannot assent to their *New-England* bounds of the day. Some *essays* I thought to have offer'd on these things, but I shall now wave it, referring my reader to those, who have already laboured at these oars, and apply my self wholly to that which is more practical. Thus much is freely acknowledged by all, that are not willing to banish the very remembrance of the name of God out of the earth, that God ought to have a day in seven for the solemn celebration of his worship, and the practice of all ages since the Apostles tell us what that day is, that among Christians hath been and is observ'd to this use. Well then, he that observeth a day, let him observe it to the Lord. The loss of any time is bad enough, but the loss of Lords-day time is the greater loss. O take heed of prophaning

phaning any part of this time, either openly or inwardly; let not sinful, vain, worldly, unnecessary, or impertinent thoughts or discourses eat out the heart and fruit of Sabbaths, sanctifie them in spirit and in truth, with the utmost of your care, reverence, and power, as God gives strength and opportunities. Forsake not the assembling of your selves together, but spend that time which God hath appointed for worship, in that worship which God hath appointed; wait on him when and where he hath promised to be found. Consider the glory of that presence in which you are, when ever you approach his Courts; and observe, wherever the people of God are met in his name and spirit there the King of heaven keeps his Court, whether the Bishop have pretended to consecrate the place or no. Look upon the Lords-day, and every part of it, as God's, by a special and peculiar propriety, and not thy own; every minute of it, that is alienated from the proper or necessary service of the day, is sacrilegiously stolen from thy maker. *If thou turn away thy foot from the Sabbath, from doing thy own pleasure on my holy day, and call the Sabbath a delight, the holy of the Lord, honourable, and shalt honour him, not doing thine own ways, nor finding thine own pleasures, nor speaking thine own words; then shalt thou delight thy self in the Lord, Isa. 58. 13, 14. Surely, God requires*  
strict-

strictness, though not superstition in the sanctification of his day. Let the Lords day be as a feast-day to thee, the welcomest day in all the week, and that not to thy body only, but to thy soul; let not thy rest be as that of the beast, but the rest of the saint, a spiritual and divine rest; the soul's solacing it self in God. Again, look on the Lord's day as thy spiritual market-day, the special time allotted thee for the laying in of provisions for thy soul, O do not spend thy time in gadding from street to street, from duty to duty, or from sermon to sermon, cheapning and prizing God's heavenly wares, or commending them to others, and yet buy nothing, but go home empty. For more to this purpose I shall refer you to the twelfth direction.

31. *Beware of leaning on thy own strength. Dir. 31.*

This broken reed will surely pierce thy hand. Alas! what is there in man, whose power is only to undo himself. *In te stas & non stas*, says *Augustin*. He that stands on his own strength is not like to stand long. *Who is this that cometh up from the wilderness, leaning on her beloved?* Cant. 8. 5. This is the gesture of the spouse of Christ; shee goes leaning. A Christian, as one says, is like a glass without a foot, that can't stand of it self, unless it lean. Be convinc'd of thy own insufficiency, both as to acts of righteousness, and acts of self-preservation.



vation. O Lord, I know that the way of man is not in himself, it is not in man that walketh to direct his own steps, Jer. 10. 23. Are not thy own sad experiences sufficient proofs of this truth? how often hast thou to thy shame, been made to sue thy own nothingness? the strength and safety of a Christian lies in God, not in himself. *Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation,* 1 Pet. 1. 5. If once thou art taken with a fond conceit of thy own sufficiency, this will breed that *vertigo* in thy head, which will cast thee into falling fits. *Frustra nititur si non innititur*, says Bernard. 'Tis in vain to labour, unless you lean. Now faith and patience are the two arms, by which thou must thus lean. Faith lays hold on God's strength, and patience waits till it be exerted. Oh how well is the poor Saint provided for, did he but rightly understand his own happiness? Is he at a loss? here's a fountain of counsel to direct him; is he in danger? here are everlasting arms to support and save him. Is he weak? here's infinite power to strengthen him; let his case be what it will, here's enough and more than enough to supply him, and that freely. How unexcusable then in the day of account must the case of all Back-sliders needs be.

*Dir. 32. 32. Maintain the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.* Oh how unlike our days were those of the Apostle; wherein he wrote to his

*Thessa-*

*Theſſalonians.* As touching brotherly love, you need not that I write unto you, for ye your ſelves are taught of God to love one another, 1 Theſſ.

4. 9. As for our times, I know not what is more needful; the decay of love is that, by which we are ſmarting to this day. When the Apoſtle had mention'd theſe three catholick graces, *Faith, Hope, and Charity*, he concludes, *The greateſt of theſe is charity*, 1 Cor. 13. 13.

It is the greateſt, not only in reſpect of duration; Faith and Hope ſhall ceaſe, but Charity abideth for ever; but in reſpect of its divine nature; it is nowhere ſaid, God is faith, or God is hope, but *God is love*, 1 John 4. 8. and in reſpect of its publick uſe and vertue: love and union is the great friend both to Church and State; where this dies, ruine and deſtruction is wont to ſucceed. *Their heart is divided, now ſhall they be found faulty*; or, now ſhall they be laid waſt, as ſome read it, *Verb.*

*Hof. 10. 1.* A little before the captivity, what convulſions, conſpiracies, and regicides were there in *Iſrael*, 2 Kings 15. Diviſion is wont to uſher in conſuſion, *I will divide them in Jacob, I will ſcatter them in Iſrael*, Gen. 49. 7.

If a kingdom, if a houſe, if *Satan* himſelf be divided, they cannot ſtand, *Mark 3. 24. &c.* Then was *Shiſhak's* time to invade *Iſrael*, when their own diviſions had ſo weakned them, 2 Chron. 12. 12. How dreadful was the effect of that wrath, which God threatned,

*Iſa.*

**OVN**

reſertur tam  
ad pœnam,  
quam ad cul-  
pam. Calv.

*Isa. 9. 19, 20. Through the wrath of the Lord of hosts is the land darkened, and the people shall be as the fuel of the fire; no man shall spare his brother. And he shall snatch on the right hand and be hungry, and he shall eat on the left hand and they shall not be satisfied, they shall eat every man the flesh of his own arm; Manasseh Ephraim, and Ephraim Manasseh. By this means a people become their own executioners. Jeremy writes this among his Lamentations, Lam. 4. 16. The anger of the Lord hath divided them, he will no more regard them, they respected not the persons of the Priests, they favoured not the Elders. Whatever a peoples strength or fortifications, their confederacies, their riches, or their multitude be, divisions and discords will easily tumble them into the dust. A strong house falls as soon as a weak, if the bearing timbers start aside from one another. But when God restores a people he unites them, and heals those breaches and dissensions that are among them. And I will make them one nation in the land upon the mountains of Israel, and one king shall be king to them all, and they shall be no more two nations, neither shall they be divided into two kingdoms any more at all, Ezek. 37. 22. Peace and union is the first national mercy that I hope to see with any comfort. Well then, let thy work be not to make, but to cement breaches among brethren. Let brotherly love continue, Heb. 13. 1. Here-*  
in

*Nulla multitudinis potentia nisi consentientis.*  
Aug.

in lies both the beauty and safety of the Church. *Jerusalem* is builded up as a City that is compact together, *Psal.* 122. 3. therefore compared to a *company of horses in Pharaoh's chariots*, *Cant.* 1. 9. that which divides it, destroys it. How vehement is the Apostle in this case, *Rom.* 16. 17, 18. *Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them which cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which ye have learned, and avoid them. For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple.* Needless separations are some of the Devil's fire-works, wherewith he sets the house of God in a flame. Peace and unity are as the joints and bands, by which all the members of the body, both *political* and *mystical*, are knit together, and increase with the increase of God, *Col.* 2. 19. Break these bands, and you destroy the body. No wonder if there be shakings, and distortions, and slippings, and failings, when every bone almost is out of joynt; and the bands and ligatures, which should hold them together are broken. Ah! whence is it that after so many strict charges from our greatest Lord and dearest friend to love and forgive one another, after so many exhortations from those, whom we own for our Fathers and Teachers, after so many examples of Families and Armies, and Kingdoms, and Empires, that have split them-

themselves on the rock of division, after so many years experience of the destructive fruit of it, and such profound advantage as the common enemy hath made of it, that though religion, liberties, and lives, though church and state lie at stake; men cannot yet forbear to take every man his brother by the throat? that among so many Christians there should be so little christianity? Is not our maker sounding us an alarm, and bidding us prepare to meet our God? Doth not the sacred Lion of heaven and earth roar, and have we not cause to tremble? Is not God's hand heavy enough, but we our selves must help forward the affliction? These are the days of God's pleading with us, discriminating times; he is now picking his *figs*, sorting and drawing his flock, the fat for the slaughter, and the scab for some smart corrosives or stinging lotions, and for his lambs he hath a bosom to shelter them; now is your time to manifest the sympathetic vertue of true grace; as there are but sheep and goats, so there is but a right hand and a left: now let it appear with whom you hope and desire to be found at last. God hath us in the fire, why should we not melt and run together into one mass? Are thy brother's trespasses greater against thee, than can be forgiven? or are they greater than those thou hopest another day to be forgiven thee? One property of the fire (as Naturalists tell us)



us) is to unite things of the same kind, and to sever things of different natures. Surely the fire that is now kindled, is like either to unite or to consume us. O doth not every element indefatigably incline to its common center? and every beast and fowl delight in their own species? and doth grace render men more brutish than the beasts, and more stupid than stocks or stones? Is religion a binding us a new to God and to one another? and shall it now abandon us from both? Is there not a kind of concord even among devils? was there room enough for a legion of them to dwell together in one man? and is there not room enough for a few legions of professors in one kingdom? The seven heads of the great Dragon are all animated with one spirit and one heart, and what! shall those that would be called the sons of God, be worse than these! If belly and members begin to fall out, and deny their mutual help, I know who will rue for it at last. The flag of union was once the banner among Christians, *Vide, inquiunt, ut invicem se diligant*, see how they love one another; but now we may say, *Vide ut invicem se dilaniant*; see how they worry one another. Oh take heed of every thing that may prove an occasion of dissension among you; let not this *meum & tuum*, which is the seed of so much contention in the world, be a make-bate among those that profess to have their treasure

and

*Caloris mundus  
est homogeneus  
congregare,  
heterogenea  
segregare.*

*Tert. Apol.*

and joynt-inheritance in heaven. Let not self-conceit on the account of any natural or acquired parts, or diversities of gifts or apprehensions or perswasions about the circumstantial of Religion puff you up, or transport you into passion or unbrother-like quarrels, distances, or causlels separations. How pertinently doth the Apostle exhort the *Romans* to this purpose? Rom. 12. 3, &c. *For I say, through the grace given unto me, to every man that is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, according as God hath dealt to every man the measure of faith.* Self-love and self-admiration is that monstrous womb that hath brought forth all those divisions and disorders, that have been hitherto foster'd among us. This is that sets men a quarrelling, and not content with that place and office in the body, wherein God hath set them, as the scope of his following exhortations intimates, and tends, in the issue, to the loss of love and charity, and consequently to all manner of licentiousness and confusion; wherefore he subjoyns, ver. 9. *Let love be without dissimulation; and be kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one another,* ver. 10. Yet here take notice by the way; I do not condemn all separation, in point of civil or sacred communion, as sinful or unnecessary; nor dare I think so, while I find such caveats in  
 God's

God's book, as 2 Cor. 6. 17. Ephes. 5. 11. 2 Thess. 3. 6. 1 Tim. 6. 5. 1 John 5. 21. 1 Cor. 5. 11. Hos. 4. 17. and while I see neither how to obtain, nor yet to retain the most necessary and sworn reformation without it. This is my principle in this case, fain would I have the company of all my mothers children walking with me in the right way; but if I cannot, I resolve never to forsake my way for their company. What is my own, I can give away; but what is God's I dare not. As for those semi-separatists (supposing the separation to be holy and necessary) as pretend to act on prudential considerations, I cannot admire their politicks: nay, I am apt to think, that there is scarce a greater stumbling-block in the way of reformation, than this halting between two; for such having attained to no sure bottom nor point of consistency, must either leave their work at halves, or else proceed farther: if the first, the work will be but humane, and so hath too little authority, nor can expect any binding power on mens consciences, or to be blest with success: if the latter, this will open the mouths of opposers to brand them with inconstancy, tyranny, arbitrary jurisdiction, &c. and so make two difficulties of one, and keep the wounds of the Church the longer open, and the last end, it may be, shall be worse than the first. I confess, the rules of prudence and moderation ought

in these cases, to be duly considered and applied; but to abate a little in some cases, is the way to lose all; to remove the prop but an inch, when the house is falling, is the way to bring all about your ears. *Let them return unto thee, but return not thou unto them, Jer. 15. 19.* It had been well for us, it may be, if our first reformers had walked by some such rule; but their dawns were of the Lord, and he hath done as it pleased him.

*Dir. 33.* 33. *Walk in all things as it becomes the Gospel.* He that hath once denied the power of godliness, will easily be tempted to deny the form of it too. Demas had no sooner forsaken Paul, but he went to Thessalonica, where (as some report) he turn'd an Idol-priest. He that will not leave his sin for his Religions sake, will soon be perswaded to leave his Religion for his sins sake. He that bids farewell to strict godliness to day, may, without much ado, be prevailed with to take his leave of profession and all to morrow. *Only let your conversation be as becometh the Gospel, Phil. 1. 27.* *as Elias & Elisha's,* worthy of the Gospel. The phrase is in effect the same with that, *Col. 1. 10. That ye might walk worthy of the Lord.* *Ephes. 4. 1. Worthy of the vocation, wherewith ye are called.* And *1 Thess. 2. 12. That ye would walk worthy of God.* Not that the Apostle aim'd in any of these places, or ever dream'd of that Popish blasphemy of meri-

*Not only k-  
minded Ap-  
stles. Day  
to day.*

*Denotat  
quandam con-  
venientiam  
& decorem,  
quae tollit con-  
pugnantiam,  
non ponit ab-  
solutam con-  
dignitatem.  
Ibid.*

*Note thy*

meritorious works of condignity; but, as it is well translated here, walk in all things as it becometh the Gospel; that is, according to Gospel-principles, and Gospel-rules. Let your faith be a Gospel-faith, your worship a Gospel-worship, your ordinances Gospel-ordinances, and your conversation a Gospel-conversation. In these two respects especially we should walk as becomes the Gospel.

1. In living by faith, and not by sence, on the blessed hope that the Gospel sets before us, and the many precious promises, respecting both this life and that to come; in having our hope in Christ and taking our delights in him, and making him our *All*, who is the sum and substance of the Gospel.

I.

2. In being led by the Spirit, acted and governed not by the lusts of the flesh, the law of the members; but by the dictates and energy of the holy Spirit. Sirs! you have taken on you a Gospel-profession; but what will this avail without a Gospel-disposition and conversation? The Gospel calls you to holiness: Oh make it your study and business, and account it your honour to be like your heavenly Father! The Gospel calls you to liberty; Oh take heed of enslaving your selves to the unrighteous wills and lusts of men; or of abusing your liberty unto licentiousness or contentiousness! The Gospel calls you to a life of praise and thankfulness: Oh live on

2.

*Note thy*



the hopes and earnest of that inheritance, which is herein tender'd and seal'd to you! live like the heirs of such a kingdom and crown; away with this low and ignoble spirit; away with these unbelieving mis-givings and dejecting fears: Hath your God made you kings and priests unto himself for ever, and adopted you unto an estate of unconceivable and eternal glory and felicity, for you to live as if your portion were in this life? or as if he that made heaven and earth were not able to perform what he hath undertaken for and in you? And remember, as Gospel-grace is great, so are Gospel-sins too: these are the *summer-fruits* which *Amos* saw, *Amos* 8. 13. 2. which are first ripe; like *Jeremiah's Almond-tree*. God will not wink at Gospel-sinners, as he winked at those that lived in the days of ignorance. If the Gospel prove of none effect for conversion, it will prove of sad effect for condemnation.

*Dir. 34.* 34. *Let the words of ministerial or fraternal reproof always find a humble, serious and grateful entertainment.* In the practice of this rule, as God hath given you two eyes, so you must look two ways, How you give reproof, and How you take reproof.

I. I. How you give reproof; that it be not neglected, nor yet done unseasonably, nor unfavourably.

I. I. That it be not neglected when it is due.

If thy brother trespass against thee, rebuke him, and if he repent, forgive him, Luke 17. 3. Brethren, if a man be overtaken in a fault, ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in the spirit of meekness, Gal. 6. 1. Exhort one another daily, while it is called to day. Heb. 3. 13. Thou shalt not hate thy brethren in thine heart, thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbour, and not suffer sin upon him, Lev. 19. 17. And if any man obey not our word by this epistle, note that man and have no company with him, that he may be ashamed: yet count him not as an enemy, but admonish him as a brother, 2 Thess. 3. 14, 15. Fraternal correction and admonition is a duty incumbent on all, the neglect whereof brings a person under the guilt of that sin which he ought to have reprov'd: therefore some read that phrase in *Leviticus*, *and not suffer sin upon him*, thus, *that thou bear not sin for him*.

*No hinc per-  
curum luas.  
Synopf.*

Let not sinful shame, slavish fear, carnal interest, luke-warm indifferency, or secret consciousness of the like guilt deter thee from thy duty, which are the rubbs that lie in the way of many. Think what a glorious thing it is to be an instrument of saving a soul from hell, *Dan. 12. 3*. Oh where are thy bowels! how canst thou see poor wretches trooping on so securely towards the chambers of death, and thou stand by as an idle spectator, not so much as minding them of their latter end, nor telling them they are out of the way? Canst

thou see a wife, a husband, a child, a brother, a friend, a servant, a neighbour, yea, or an enemy caught in a gin, or fallen into a pit, and not so much as lend a hand to deliver them? Wouldst thou see a wolf or a fox fetching away one lamb after another out of thy flock, and not arise to rescue them? Where is thy Christianity? canst thou hear the sacred name of God prophan'd, the precious blood of thy Redeemer despised, the authority of thy Maker trampled on, and his laws broken, and the lusts of the Devil fulfilled, and thou by thy silence seem to give consent to all these things, though I confess that silence is sometimes a sufficient reproof. Oh take heed thou be not judg'd at last as a partner with those, from whose sins thou now thinkest thy self free enough! Again, by admonishing others, thou wilt the more abundantly confirm thy self. *Thou which teachest another, teachest thou not thy self?* Rom. 2. 21. Common shame will engage thee to abstain from those things which thou hast condemn'd in others. Besides, by this means thou shalt escape both the guilt and the contagion of the times and company with whom thou livest, which will be enough to defray the charges of thy duty.

2. See that it be not done unseasonably. Every thing is beautiful in its season. *There is a time to keep silence, and a time to speak,* Eccles. 3. 7. *Abigail knew her time to treat with her* chur-

churlish husband, 1 Sam. 25. 36. All seasons and places are not convenient for the discharge of this office. That which may be taken in good part at one time, may but provoke at another; as when a person is under some acute or intoxicating distemper of body, or passions, perturbations, or perplexities of mind; in a hurry of business, or in the company of others, especially such, whose good thoughts he prizes, or that knew nothing of the matter before, or that are his enemies, and would be glad to hear of something to upbraid him with, or that are loose and dissolute, and likely to cast out scorns, and to harden the reprov'd the more, both against the reprov'd and reproof. In such cases as these, the words of reproof are unseasonable, and wou'd do more harm than good.

3. See that it be not done unsavourily. And to this end it had need be attempted with these six qualifications.

1. With *Prudence*; rightly weighing the qualities, tempers, and conditions of persons, with the nature and circumstances of actions.

*As an ear-ring of gold, and an ornament of fine gold, so is a wise reprover upon an obedient ear.* Prov. 25. 12. and the truth is, he had need be a very wise reprover, that expects to find an obedient ear, especially in such unseasonable times as these are. The wisdom of a reprover must appear in this, that there be clear evidence, and suffici-

See Perh. an  
Galat. cap. 6.  
ver. 11

cient ground for his reproof; the circumstances of times, places and persons must be duly considered, and then the reproof cloathed in such a dress, as that it may appear to be a reproof, and not a reproach; that the very aim and end of it is not to defame, but to reform.

2. 1. With *Impartiality*, which must respect both persons and things, *Persons*. If one be reprov'd, and another wink'd at and flatter'd, this will beget a prejudice in the reprov'd; if either nearness of relation, worldly interest, or greatness of place deter thee from thy duty, thou wilt be judg'd to be partial, and that thy reproof proceeds not from sense of duty, but from pride or ill-will. Yet take heed that in giving reproof to superiours (which is a difficult task, and requires more prudence, than most people have to shew) that which thou would'st should be taken for impartiality and zeal, do not favour rather of incivility, pride, or envy; a difference must be observ'd, according to the differences of persons, or causes, *Jude 22. 23.* *Things*. If one sort of sins be reprov'd, and not another, especially such as the reprov'd himself is, or hath been guilty of: this is enough to frustrate all the good effects of it. Or if lesser matters only be taken notice of, and greater things pass by, thou wilt be judg'd as a pragmatistical frivolous carper, rather than an honest reprov'd.

3. 3. With *seriousness*. There are some that seem



seem sometimes to offer something like a reproof, but in such a light, flashy, trifling, jesting manner, that they do but expose the things of God to the greater contempt. Where there is not that reverence, seriousness and gravity that becomes sacred things, men do but multiply and aggravate their own sins in reproving other mens. 'Tis true, there is an extreme on the other hand, *viz.* too much sowness and austerity, which, if it be not allayed with a serious and holy pleasantness, it is like to render the duty fruitless. Reproof is of it self a bitter herb, which will hardly pass, unless it be candied with the sugar of a chearful countenance and manner of expression. But always take heed that it be done so, as that all may see that you are in earnest, and do not trifle with, nor make light of that which you undertake to reprove. If thou wilt have another to be affected with the sence of an evil, thou must first let him see that thou thy self art affected with it. He that reproves a sin, is, as it were, in the place of God, and stands in God's stead to his offending brother; therefore let it be done with that seriousness of spirit and holy gravity, as that the person may see himself reprov'd of God, and not only of man.

*Si vis me  
flere dolen-  
dum est pro  
peccatis tui.  
tuo.*

4. With Love. When the Apostle had exhorted to brotherly admonition and reproof, *Gal. 6. 1.* he presently adds, *ver. 2. Bear ye one anothers burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ,*

4.

*Christ*, even that *new commandment*, which he gave his Church, *to love one another*, John 13. 34, 35. which is *אֶת־אֶחָיו* call'd the law of Christ. Love mixt with reproof makes it to be an *excellent oyl*, as *David* calls it, *Psal.* 141. 5. which hath a vertue in it, not only to cleanse, but to heal. This is the way to insinuate instruction into the soul, and to take the heart with an holy guile: but a reproof mixt with passion, and favouring of ill-will, is like a medicine compounded of violent simples uncorrected, which do far more harm than good. Therefore if thou designest the glory of God, thy brothers good, or thy own comfort, see that thy love do convincingly discover it self in all those admonitions thou offerest unto others. Yet I must confess, that sometimes a holy sarcasm and biting corrosive is not only lawful, but necessary; that is, when milder reproofs have proved ineffectual, or a person begins to grow incorrigible, or is more likely to be wrought upon by shame, than by any other more ingenuous and rational way: such as that which God himself used toward our fallen parents, *Gen.* 3. 22. *The man is become as one of us*, as the Serpent had promised them, that is most like unto us. So *Judges* 10. 14. *Cry unto the Gods which ye have chosen, let them deliver you*, a cutting reproof of their idolatry: and that of *Elijah* to the worshippers of *Baal*, *1 Kings* 18. 17. *Cry aloud, for he is a God*

God

God, either he is talking, or pursuing, or in a journey, or sleeping. These and the like biting taunts, methink, are too sharp to be plac'd under a bare irony, as Mr. Hall doth.. But such manners of reproof must be prudently and sparingly used, and seldom or never towards superiours, lest they exasperate rather than reform.

5. With *Humility*. Pride is one of the worst ingredients that can be mixt with reproof, it usually makes the remedy worse than the disease. *My brethren be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation;* do not in a masterly, censorious manner exercise a castigatory authority over your brethren. Pride takes a delight in judging of others, because it loves to sit in the chair of arrogance, and to seem to be better than others: and a hard matter it is for a person to comport himself so in this duty, as to escape the imputation of it; therefore you ought to be the more careful to avoid the least appearances of it. Oh let not pride or envy be mask'd under the veil of zeal! Wherefore he adds, *considering thy self, lest thou also be tempted;* an excellent remedy, if rightly applied, against the malignant tumour of self-conceit. Self-inspection is one of the best preservatives against self-attribution, and the best preparative for brotherly admonition.

6. With *Patience*. It may be thou may'st meet with repulses and slings, and have dirt cast

Gen. 19. 9.

cast back in thy face; here is work for patience. To have thy love requited with wrath, and thy compassion with passion; to lose a friend for shewing thy self most friendly: in this case thou wilt have need of patience. So when thou shalt have admonished once and again, and no appearance of reformation, but rather the contrary, this also requires patience. To bear rebukes and bitter retaliations and abuses, as *Lot* did from the *Sodomites*, and to wait for the desired issue; no Husbandman hath such need of patience as he that reproveth in the gate, yea, or in a corner, either publickly or privately. Well then! take unto thee thy *sorip* and thy *sling* of Gospel-simplicity and sincerity, and choose thee these six *smooth stones* out of God's *brook*, and go forth against the *Philistine*, whoever it be, that hath *desied* or dishonoured the God of *Israel*, and the Lord shall be with thee. Ah! how faulty are Christians in this respect, either utterly neglecting the duty, or spoiling it by its ill management. 'Tis seldom we speak purely for God, but in our own causes, and then passion or self-ends marres all.

2. How to take a reproof. This I shall answer briefly in these three things.

1. With humility and self-denial. The flesh will storm and fret, especially where there is a secret intimation of guilt, and a loathsomeness to have it discovered, or suspected. Guilt is

is a *noli me tangere*, a disease that cannot endure to be toucht. Yet sometimes this guilt is not perceived, nor will be acknowledged, through the spiritual blindness that is upon the mind; though the matter of fact cannot be denied, yet the formality and moral pravity of the action will not be confest. This proceeds from a fond and false opinion that men have of themselves; from a proud pharisaical conceit of their own goodness, and from the destructive craft and wiles of Satan, whereby he teacheth men to hide or extenuate their sins and to hold fast deceit; and it being so, there had need be the greater measure of self-denial. Again, some are so rough-handed, that they know not how to deal gently in this case, but passion presently sets them all in a flame; that cannot teach an offender, but as *Gideon* taught the men of *Succoth*, *with thorns of the wilderness, and with bryars*: this is not like to sit easie, nor to work well, without a double measure of mortification; the want of which hath cost too many the shipwrack both of their faith and profession, and made them to persecute what once they did applaud.

2. With *Thankfulness*. No man questions but that necessary physick deserves thanks, as well as necessary food; yea, the most loathsome potion, when need requires, as well as the most reviving cordial, a reproof as well as an approbation. Holy *David* was of this mind,

*Lut*



*Let the righteous smite me, and it shall be a kindness, let him reprove, it shall be an excellent oyle, which shall not break my head, Psal. 141. 5.* Let him reprove, and in reprovng, let him smite, and it shall be a kindness, and so taken by me. Plain dealing, though never so rustick or homely, is in every wise man's account, more thank-worthy than the highest *elogies* of flattering lips; it is indeed one of the greatest kindnesses that can be shown thee. Wouldst thou not account thy self bound to thank and to reward such a one, as should leave his own way or work to run after thee, to tell thee thou art out of thy way? that there are thieves or murderers way-laying thee at such or such a place, which if thou wilt escape, thou must hasten to return, and take such or such a way? doth not such a friend deserve thanks? surely much more then in the case of thy soul, by how much the greater the concernment and danger of it is. Is it not worth thanks to be saved from hell and from the wrath to come? doubtless those that are now there, would not begrudge their thanks to be delivered.

3. With a serious resolution to *reform*; otherwise, what doth the reproof signifie? to this end it must be received with self-examination. When Christ had admonish'd his disciples of a traytor that was among them, every one begins to reflect on himself, *Master art I?* Matth. 26. 45. *A reproof entreateth more into*

into a wise man (says Solomon) than an hundred stripes into a fool, Prov. 17. 10. This spiritual folly is like the scales of the *Leviathan*, the sharpest arrows will not pierce them; nothing duly consider'd nor laid to heart by them. Nor is it enough to reform materially only, to multiply external services, which is ordinary with hypocrites to do on false and Pharisaical principles; while the heart is not at all changed; but the reformation must begin within: till the fountain be healed, there's nothing done in God's account. *Correction is grievous to him that forsaketh his way, and he that hateth reproof shall die*, Prov. 15. 10. He that hateth reproof, that is, he that hateth to be reformed by reproof. *A scorner loveth not one that reproveth him, neither will he go unto the wise*, ver. 12. He loveth not one that reproveth him, because he loveth not to forsake those evil ways, for which he is reprov'd; therefore death is here denounced against such a one. Nay, *he that being often reprov'd hardneth his neck*, i. e. refuseth to be reclaimed, *shall suddenly be destroyed, and that without remedy*, Prov. 29. 1.

*Obj.* But some may cavil thus. Those that undertake to reprove us are as guilty themselves, either in the same, or in another kind: and how can we endure to hear the Devil rebuke sin?

*Ans.* 1. I must confess, *Turpe est doctori* *Ans.* 1.

*cum*

*cum culpa redarguit ipsum.* It is a shameful thing when a man's reproofs shall flie back in his own face; he that will take spots out of another's cloaths, must do it with clean fingers; and first pluck out the *beam* before he quarrel at the *mote*; that he may escape the proverb, *Physician heal thy self.* But

2. Take heed of bearing false witness against thy neighbour, of looking on thy brothers infirmities through a multiplying-glass, as thou wilt find thy self apt to do, even in revenge, when once thy own miscarriages are question'd by him; when the gall is touch'd and the passion a little up, every fault will appear double: take heed therefore that thou do not sin by uncharitable censoriousness, because another doth his duty towards thee by a friendly admonition.

3. But yet suppose it be true, that thy reprover be guilty, as who is there that liveth and sinneth not? should none be allowed to reprove, but those that are without sin, there should be no reproofs in the world, but by messengers from heaven. Alas! what a pitiful quarrel is this, proceeding meerly from self-conceit and enmity against the truth? If the Devil (to speak in thy dialect) should prove so ingenuous as to reprove sin, is the reproof in it self ever the worse, or the sin ever the more justifiable? Wilt thou go on to live in a sin, because he is a sinner that reproves thee?

Wouldst

Would'st thou deal so in a case that concerns thy body or estate? Should a brothel that hath wasted all, tell thee of a flaw in thy deed, or a lame or sick physician, of a mortal disease thou art entering into, would'st thou chuse rather to die, or to be beggar'd for ever, than to accept of help or advice from such hands? Would you not take up a Jewel, though you found it on a dunghil? Had not *Elijah* dealt both unwisely and ungratefully, if he had refused his meat, because brought him by Ravens? It is past question with me, that the Devil hath oftentimes a great hand in stirring up persons to give reproofs, either unseasonably, or unfavourily, in anger, derision, revenge, or being themselves openly guilty; by which means he hath the greater advantage to harden both. He hath observ'd that reproofs are wont to do a great deal of good, or a great deal of harm, therefore he will, if possible, either prevent or pervert it. Well then! if your own souls be dear to you, labour to cross Satan's designs herein. However the reproof be given, lay thy hand on thy mouth, and take it as at the hands of God, and eye not the instruments. Remember, he that is past reproof is past hope; what quick work did God make with the hardned *Sodomites*, that would not hearken to the gentle admonitions of righteous *Lot*? Gen. 19. 7. *I pray you brethren do not so wickedly*; How could he have spoken

more mildly in such a case? but what said they? *Stand back, this one fellow came in to sojourn, and he will needs be a judge; now will we deal worse with thee, than with them.* So when he spake to warn his sons-in-law, *he seemed as one that mocked, verse 14.* but they knew soon after that God was in earnest. Yet some there are, that can take a reproof with patience, and shew no great dislike, but yet it rankles within, and causes them to meditate revenge, and turns love into hatred. Others, that can hear a reproof, be it never so sharp, but are resolv'd to walk in their own ways; that are dead in trespasses and in sins, on whom all the blows fall as on anvils. Others, that on carnal or moral principles reform a while as to some externals, but still maintain the root, and keep up a secret love to sin. If any of these be thy case, thou art going backward, and art like to end sadly and shamefully at last.

**Dir. 35.**

35. *Eye that eye that always eyes thee.* Thou art never out of God's eye, let him be never out of thine. How excellently useful and becoming a Christian is that of the Heathen Seneca? *Sic vivendum est, tanquam in conspectu Dei oramus: sicque cogitandum, tanquam aliquis in pectus possit inspicere.* So ought a man to live as in the sight of God, and so to think as if others could look into the secret of the heart. This was the rule which God himself gave unto Abraham, Gen. 17. 1. *I am the Almighty*

*Senec. Epist.*

*Ne semper  
maius pra-  
sentem  
Synops.*

*Almighty*



הנהלך

fac te ambulare, vel in-  
definenter  
ambula.

*Almighty God, walk before me and be thou perfect.* Set me always before thee. Habituate thyself to a walking always as in my presence, with that holy and filial fear, care, comfort and composedness as becomes so glorious and so gracious a presence; this is the way to perfection; to be more and more like that God before whom thou walkest. Oh what a command will the sense of that all-seeing eye have upon the heart! *How can I do this great wickedness and sin against God?* says Joseph; He saw that glorious eye that always watched him, though his Mistresses were too blind to see it. In this sense we may also apply the proverb, *Magistri oculus saginat equum.* The master's eye makes a fat horse; the lively apprehension of God's all-searching and holy eye makes a fruitful and obedient Christian; therefore sinners are call'd, such as forget God, and God is not in all their thoughts: they are such as banish the thoughts and fear of God from them, that say in their hearts, *who seeth us? and who knoweth us?* Isa. 29. 15. *The Lord seeth us not, the Lord hath forsaken the earth,* Ezek. 8. 12. When a soul hath thus shut his eyes upon God, and is arriv'd to this pass of Atheistical security, what temptation is there like to come amiss to him; *Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil in thy sight,* says David, Psal. 51. 4. Alas! he was not aware of this while the temptation was upon him; he had only the

object of his lust, not the object of his fear and dread in his eye. How is the thief, the adulterer, the murderer asham'd and afraid to act their villanies, while they observe that the eye of man is upon them? what a power hath the presence of a poor child of God, even on those that are of themselves, and with their own companions dissolute enough? how much more would the sence of the Divine presence reign in the sinful exorbitances of the flesh? Surely 'tis for want of this, that men walk so much as without God in the world. These two ways will this rule tend to thy strength and establishment. 1. It will engage thy heart to a more holy, self-denying, and circumspect walking before God; it will lay an awe and restraint upon thee, and by degrees will make close walking with him to become habitual. 2. It will engage God to walk with thee, to manifest his love and care, and to pour out his spirit to thee. *The Lord is with you while ye be with him, and if ye seek him, he will be found of you; but if ye forsake him, he will forsake you,* 2 Chron. 15. 2. and how great is thy security, while God is with thee to take thy part, and to perfect thy victory? Now let me tell thee, if thou forget or make light of this rule, I utterly despair of any good thou art like to receive from any of the rest.

*Dir. 36.* 36. Lastly, *Let your root be firm, and your branch fruitful.* God hath planted thee a noble vine,

vine in a fruitful hill; such a vine will become such a vineyard. 'Tis one token of a field that God hath cursed, when the seed of an *Homer* shall yield but an *Ephah*. I would here caution you of these eight or nine worms especially, which if not timely destroyed, will prove destructive both to root and branch.

I. *Ignorance*. This will puff you up; 'tis light and empty, and surely a feather is not like to contend long with a whirl-wind. St. *Augustine* states these two general causes of sin, *Ignorance*, and *Infirmity*; therefore says *David*, *The Lord is my light and my salvation*, *Psal. 27. 1. My light*, to deliver me from ignorance, *my salvation*, to help my infirmity. 'Tis a rule in physick, *Caput malum est caput malorum*; *An evil head is the head of evils*. Blindness of mind is the first step to hell; the Papists call it, *Sapientem sanctamque stultitiam cecæ obedientiæ*: *The wise and holy folly of blind obedience*. The truth is, they had need to claw their clients, and speak honourably of this devout sortishness; because, as *Demetrius* once said in another case, *Sirs! ye know that by this craft we have our wealth*. A notable stratagem it is to uphold their kingdom of darkness; and how highly soever it is by them applauded, sad experience hath convinc'd us of the manifold mischiefs of it; nay, common reason tells us, that the darkness of the body cannot be so dangerous as that of the

I.

*Ducbus de causis peccatis, aut non dum videndo quid facere debeamus, aut non faciendo quod debere fieri jam videmus. Quorum duorum, illud ignorantia malum est, hoc infirmitas. Aug. Ench. c. 81. Ut illuminatio detrahatur ignorantiam, salus infirmitatem. Ibid.*

*Mat. 19. 25.*

Bar. in Col.  
v. 2. ver. 23.

Fertul. ad.  
vers. Marc.  
l. 1.

Rom. 12. 1.  
1 Cor. 14.  
14. 15.

soul; therefore well may the learned *Davianant* call it, *Non modo stultam, sed impiam & irreligiosam*, not only foolish, but impious and irreligious. *Bonum enim non est, quod non est rationabiliter bonum.* The service we perform to God, must be a *reasonable service*. Alas! how many are there in the world, that zealously profess and contend for they know not what? they will be *Presbyterian, Independent, Episcopal, Anabaptist, &c.* while they never understood the hundredth part of any one of these, nor wherein they differ from one another, much less from their rule, and yet all others are knaves, or fools, or hypocrites; that will not be of their faction. How easie a matter is it to lead such blind zealots to *Rome*; or *Hell*, before ever they understand or mistrust where they are. Surely if natural darkness be an enemy to nature, moral darkness is much more an enemy to grace.

2. *Hypocrisie.* Be not like those *Toads* in some Countries, that carry a Jewel in their heads, but poison in their hearts. Those that deceive others with a false shew of holiness, deceive themselves with a false hope of happiness: if thy root be rotten 'twill be impossible to preserve thee long from withering or falling. To counterfeit the coin of Heaven is treason against the King of Heavens: yes, a painted harlot is far more tolerable than a painted hypocrite. O be not like the *Night-gale*,

gale, of whom it is said, she is *vox & prae-  
rea nihil*, a mere voice and no more. Be not  
like Gods in the eyes of men; and Devils in  
the eyes of God. Be not like those whitened  
walls and garnished sepulchers, the Scripture  
speaks of; nor like those tavern doors, that  
are motted with good sentences; *Watch and  
pray. Be sober, Fear God, &c.* and yet no-  
thing but drunkenness, excess and fornications  
within.

3. *Self-confidence.* Never surer to fall, than  
when thou trustest to a broken reed. *He that  
trusteth in his own heart is a fool; Prov. 28. 26.*  
'Tis true, we are all ready in profession to dis-  
claim this; but I dare affirm, that there is  
scarce any one sin more practically reigning  
among professors than this is. *When I say to  
the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trust  
to his own righteousness and commit iniquity, all  
his righteousnesses shall not be remembred; but  
for his iniquity that he hath committed, he shall  
die for it; Ezek. 33. 13.* when once thou art  
come to trusting in thy own righteousness, the  
next thing is, committing iniquity. Oh! with  
what care and holy jealousy should Christians  
walk in this respect? *Hoc ipsum vehementius ti-  
mere debent, quod non timent,* thy greatest fear  
should be thy want of fear. Self-confidence  
is the greatest self-deceit in the world. This  
holy fear is *custos innocentiae*, as Cyprian calls it.  
*Anchora cordis*, says Gregory, the nail that fa-

3.

*Aug. de  
Temp.*



תרא

conglutinat  
oris.

stens the heart to God. *Thou shalt fear the Lord thy God--and to him shalt thou cleave,* Deut. 10. 20. to him thou shalt be glued, as both *Hebrew* and *Septuagint* signifie. Take heed thy knowledge or parts do not deceive thee, by puffing thee up, or leading thee with a false light into errors. Take heed thy duties do not deceive thee, in feasting thee with false comforts. Take heed thy experiences do not deceive thee with the delusions of Satan, yea, take heed thy victories do not deceive thee, with some self-attributing reflections; rejoyce with trembling, lest when thou begin securely to set thy foot on the necks of thy fallen enemies, thou find it but a retreat and not a victory, and more life yet in them than thou canst well overcome.

4.

4. *Blind zeal.* This is like the fire of hell: heat without light. A zeal that is spiritually blind is as ready to run backward as forward, and which way soever it take; it is wont to drive furiously. Zeal is the fire of the soul; send a blind man with fire among combustible matter, and what may you expect? Blind zeal will quickly turn a hot professor into a hellish persecutor. But I have in several places been touching on this already.

5.

5. *Unbelief.* Here lies the great root of all apostacy, *An evil heart of unbelief,* Heb. 3. 12. According to the measure of your faith will be the measure of your perseverance; the unbeliever

believer never closed with Christ, and therefore cannot walk with him, they are not agreed; he was never really ingrafted into the true vine, therefore cannot abide in him. 'Tis faith that lays the foundation, but where there is none, or but a rotten foundation laid, the building is not like to stand long.

6. *Sinful fear.* This will distract and divide the heart, weaken the hands, and enslave the soul; as ever you hope to persevere, take heed of these base fears; these will represent things otherwise to thy mind, than they are; make dwarfs to look like giants, and mole-hills like mountains, and every bush like a bear. I have read of a parcel of drunkards coming out of a Tavern, and seeing the shadows of the chimnies in the street by the light of the Moon, took them for great blocks, or barracadoes in their way, which on their hands and knees they endeavoured to climb and scramble over: such are the strange delusions of those that are spiritually drunken with the cares or fears of this world, overcome with every shadow, and many times in fear, where no fear is. Sirs! you know not how far you may yet be tried, nor how God may let loose the sons of violence upon you; let not carnal fear ever betray your cause. *Satiū est aliū me mori scelere, quam motu nostro*, says Alexander, I had rather be slain by the wicked hands of my enemy, than to die for fear of dying.

6.

Adam, 3<sup>rd</sup>  
rit. Navigat.

Q. cur. 1. 2.

7. *Private-spiritedness.* Be not like careless *Gallio*, or lukewarm *Laodicea*. How tender was good *Josiah's* heart? *2 Chron. 34. 27.* not so much for his own personal concerns, as for the house and Church of God, which lay under those hainous pollutions and heavy comminations. How was *David* afflicted? *Psal. 119. 136. that rivers of water ran down his eyes,* and that not for any private wrongs of his own, but *because they keep not thy law.* How was poor *Jeremiah* affected and afflicted with the sense of those calamities and ruines of the Church of God? *Jer. 9. 1. O that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears.* &c. Old *Eli* was more griev'd at the loss of the Ark, than of his two sons. The Psalmist bewails the burning of God's house more than of his own, and the desolations of the Church more than of the Kingdom, *Psalms 73. beg.* A private spirit will easily be led aside by a private interest. When they would have stopt *Luther's* mouth with preferment, 'twas answer'd, that he car'd not for gold: it might indeed have tempted an *Achan*, a *Gehazi*, a *Judas*, a *Demas*, yea, and thousands of the professors of our days, but not a *Luther*. Oh how far beneath the noble spirit of a Christian are these low, sordid, and private designs! how little love to Christ doth it argue? yea, horrible idolatry it is, that self should be serv'd before God. Surely, a publick spirit is the

*1 Sam. 4. 18.*

*Germana illa  
bestia non cu-  
pat aurum.  
Melch. Ad.  
Vn. Luth.*

the best and liveliest image of God in the creature, and every child of God must resemble his heavenly Father in this respect.

8. *Carnal hopes.* To this also I have been speaking already; but let me warn you once more, take heed of flattering your selves with great expectations, of crying peace to your selves while God is at war. I am deceiv'd if there be not yet a more dangerous ford between us and shoar, than ever this generation yet waded through; look for it; and oh that this cup might pass from us! but the counsels of the Lord must stand. Nothing tends more immediately to the making you secure, as Satan and your enemies would have you to be, than those false hopes; and nothing nearer to apostasy than security. Remember it was *darkness* (the emblem of security) that was the judgment that immediately preceded that last and fatal stroke on Egypt.

9. Lastly, *any one beloved lust.* Take heed the *Delilah* do not at last betray thee. Though the nature of man be universally deprav'd, and a general antipathy against all that is spiritually good be rooted there; yet ordinarily, if not always, there is some one or more peculiarly espoused before all the rest, either from the inclination of mens constitutions, their callings, or interests in the world. Take heed then, though thou seem to be clean escaped the common pollutions of the world; one un-

seen

seen leak is enough to sink thee, and one unmortified lust enough to damn thee: this will always lie as a block in thy way; let thy profession, thy knowledge, thy gifts, thy zeal, thy good works otherwise be what they will, this one *flie* will spoil all thine *ointment*; this *worm* will smite the fair *gourd* at the root and cause it to wither.

And now Sirs! I fear that by this time, I have almost tir'd you: I confess my directory part hath been a great deal more than at first I intended; but the importance of the work shall be my apology for so doing. I must now begin to take my leave of you, but that I may not leave these *36 nails* (on which I have been so long knocking) unriveted: I shall endeavour to fasten all with a few pressing motives. You have heard what the disease is, and who the physician, what his terms are, and that the only way to be healed is to turn to him. *36* directions you have had as necessary mediums to guide you to, and settle you on this great physician of souls. Now tell me, what is your answer to him that hath sent me to you? are you resolv'd to take the Lord's counsel, and to walk by his rule? or will you stop your ears and mock on? must all this be but the heavy aggravation of your doom at last? Have I been hanging mill-stones all this while about your necks? Must that word sink you which is appointed to save you? Must these

poor



poor papers of mine but kindle the fire in *Tophet* under you? the Lord forbid! Sirs! *We preach not our selves, but Christ Jesus the Lord,* 2 Cor. 4. 5. chap. 5. 28. *and our selves your servants for Christ Jesus sake. And being Ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us, we pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. Oh! why should we not prevail with those that profess to expect shortly to be either in heaven or in hell? How is it that rational souls should, on cold blood, rush on everlasting burnings in despite of all that their poor brethren, by reason, or scripture can do to dissuade them? Well! what shall I take now, as your last answer? will you tell me still of *hereafters*, and put me off with *tomorrows*? let me forewarn you once more, these *tomorrows* are seldom found on this side a miserable eternity: you were even as good speak out plainly with those, Jer. 44. 16, 17. *As for the word that thou hast spoken unto us in the name of the Lord, we will not hearken unto thee: but we will certainly do whatsoever thing goeth forth out of our own mouth.* A procrastination proves sometimes of worse consequence than a flat denial; but in hopes of better success, at least, with some, I will offer such motives as at present are at hand with me.*

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I. *The wound thou liest under is spiritual, Mot. I.* a soul-sickness, and therefore the more dangerous. Were it only a disease of thy body, I would

would not, nay, I should not need to say much to persuade thee to a cure: But there are these two things here, that urge me to do my utmost to persuade thee.

1. The *Difficulty* of being cur'd, yet not in respect of the physician, but in respect of the patient, as hath been demonstrated at large already. The physician is both able and ready, but the patient is untoward, and hence arises the difficulty; there is that *law in the members*, that spirit of rebellion in the heart, that will not easily be subdued; that *strong hold*, that will not be surrendred without storm. Never was squeamish stomach, or distemper'd brain so averse from the most loathsome physick, or extremest remedies, as the soul is from the way of its spiritual cure. No disease in the world so intricate, so stubborn, or so prone to relapse. Yet let not this difficulty discourage, but quicken thee: double difficulty calls for double diligence, unless it be in such trivial cases, where the end is not like to defray the cost of the means.

2. The *Misery* of being not cured. Thou must be heal'd or thou must be damn'd; there is no disease of thy body to be compar'd, in its nature or consequents, with that of the soul; no *blindness* like the blindness of the mind, no *Stone*, or *Plague* like the stone and plague of the heart; ; no *Lethargy* like the spirit of slumber; no *Imposthume* like that of hypo-

hypocrisie; no *Dropsie* like that of covetousness; no *Gangrene* like heresie; no *Fever* like that of envy or discontent; no *Tympany* like pride; no *Epilepsie* like back-sliding; the one reaches but the body, the other ruins both body and soul. Well then! if thou art not one of those blind infidels, that will not believe there is a heaven, till they see themselves shut out of it for ever, or a hell, till they begin to burn and howl in the unquenchable flames of it, let this be one motive with thee to look out for a cure. Oh do not wilfully throw away an immortal soul, which is of more value than the whole world, for want of a little timely and serious care, a little self-denial, or for the sake of a brutish and unprofitable lust. Were not the glory of God and thy own soul at stake, for me thou should'st take thy course.

2. *The wound is mortal.* It will certainly *Mot. 2.* cost thee thy life, if not seasonably prevented; thy sickness is unto death, in respect of the righteous law of God, and its own natural tendency and demerit. *The wages of sin is death*, Rom. 6. 23. *The soul that sinneth it shall die*; and is death nothing? Were it indeed but the dissolution of that which is corruptible, thy returning to thy dust and embracing of worms and rottenness; were it but the renting asunder of soul and body, and an eternal adieu to all the vain pleasures, honours and



and lusts, to all the great projects, hopes and interests, to all that good wherein thy soul delighted here, it were no great matter; but when the strong cords of the first death shall be exchange'd for the flaming chains of the second death, and thy grave shall be but the black portal to that infernal pit, where the dregs of divine wrath shall be thy portion for ever, this thou wilt find to be something. But I have told thee more at large what thy portion shall be already; if yet thou wilt run the adventure, what can I do more for thee, but take up my lamentation, and pour out my tears over thee.

*Mot. 3. 3. The wound is not yet incurable; unless thou liest under that sin against the Holy Ghost. Though thine eyes be shut, and thy mind darkned, thy heart hardned, thy affections debauched, thy will enslaved, thy conscience seared, and all thy members devoted to the service of thy lusts; though thou hast sinned against light, against convictions, against profession, resolutions, prayers, promises, covenants, mercies and judgments; though thou hast play'd the hypocrite all thy days hitherto, or wallowed in the most beastly abominations, or raged with the greatest madness against God and Christ, yet is not thy disease incurable; while there is life there is hope, if thou art but willing; while there is a promise tender'd, thou may'st, on the conditions*

ditions of it, lay hold on it. God is yet willing, and freely offers his help; so, the golden scepter is yet held forth, his trumpets yet sound a parley and a peace on honourable terms. *Behold, I stand at the door and knock, if any man hear my voice and open the door, I will come into him and sup with him, and he with me, Rev. 3. 20. Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near. Let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts, and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon, Isa. 55. 6, 7.* Oh! methink this should be enough to engage thee; if thou hast any respect to thy own happiness, consult it in season. Sinner! didst thou but know what a load of guilt lies upon thee, what the nature of sin is, and what the holiness and justice of God, and what the frailty of thy own life is, thou would'st wonder how it hath been possible, that thou should'st all this while be out of hell; and why hast thou been so long spared? Canst thou think it was only to gratifie thy carnal heart, and sensual desires, and to treasure up yet more wrath? may'st thou not be assur'd of the contrary? *Rom. 2. 4.* that it is to lead thee to repentance? Now is the accepted time, wilt thou go a sowing, when others are going to reap? wilt thou go a buying of oyl, when thou art call'd to enter with

the Bridegroom? dost thou hope to repent and reform, when on thy death-bed thou shalt be summoned to pass up thy account. Well! once more remember, that thou wert warn'd before it was too late.

*Mat. 4.* 4. *There is but one in heaven and in earth that is able to heal thee; and this one is as willing as able: and all this you have already heard prov'd. Go where thou wilt, thou shalt never be healed unless the balm of God's Gilead do it, For though thou wash thee with nitre and take thee much sope, yet thine iniquity is marked before me, saith the Lord God, Jer. 2. 22. Deceived wretch! dost thou hope that Mammon shall be thy Saviour? that thy silver and gold shall bribe thy holy judge? or purchase thee an inheritance in glory? or that thy own righteousness or duties shall shrine thee from the vengeance of offended Majesty? Hath God told thee there is no other name given under heaven by which thou canst be saved, and wilt thou adventure thy soul on it to find some other besides Christ? Though there be many physicians for thy body, there is but one God that can give thee health, or bless the means they prescribe: Though there be many helpers of your faith and joy, and instruments under Christ to promote the work of your salvation, there is but one Jesus; miss him and you miss heaven. Can you, dare you deny this? why then should not this motive have*

have the same influence on you, as it had on back-sliding *Israel*, *Jer. 3. 23.* Truly in vain is salvation looked for from the hills and from the multitude of mountains, truly in the Lord our God is the salvation of *Israel*: therefore behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God; and if there were none else that could work a temporal deliverance for them, much less could any other work for them spiritual and eternal salvation.

5. God will account himself honoured by *Mot. 5.* your sincere return to him. To back-slide is (as you have heard) a dishonour to him; therefore to return is to honour him, and so he is pleased to take it, *Isa. 29. 13.* This people draweth nigh to me with their lips, and with their mouth do honour me: it was a kind of honour, though but in appearance; had it been in truth, it had been both accepted and rewarded. Now sinner! what is it that thou art made for? yea, what is that which makes thee for ever, but the honouring and glorifying thy maker? honour him and thou shalt be honoured by him. Them that honour me I will honour, *1 Sam. 2. 30.* What is our honouring of God, but our reflecting the beams of that honour that dwells essentially and superlatively in him? he is not capable of receiving any real accession to his glory; all that we can do for God is but what the Moon doth for the Sun, to reflect the beams of his

glorious light upon the benighted horizon of this blind world ; our highest and only honour is to honour the *Father of lights* : and oh ? what wonderful condescension is it, that infinite Majesty should account himself honoured by such contemptible worms as we are ! Is it not enough that he should have patience to endure such guilty wretches to approach near him, though in never so humble, serious, or penitent a manner ? but to delight in such approaches, to account himself honour'd by it, this is far more. Consider now whether thou wert best to chuse, to honour God, or to dishonour him.

*Mot. 6. 6. Heaven it self will rejoyce at your return. I say unto you that likewise joy shall be in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons, which need no repentance, Luke 15. 9. See how the returning prodigal was entertain'd, verse 22. compared with 29. No sooner was he come within sight, but the bowels of his tender-hearted father began to yearn upon him, and with open arms runs to embrace him ; calls presently for the best robe, for the ring and the shooes and the fatted calf ; both cloaths and feasts him, nothing is too good for him, never a stripe, nor a word, nor a frown for any of his riotous miscarriages ; the joy of his return swallows up all the passions of his displeasure : nay, nor will he rejoyce alone, but all the house*



house and all the neighbourhood shall rejoyce with him, and that with musick and with dancing, the common ceremonies of solemn and extraordinary joy; which the elder brother who had never so offended, murmuringly says, was more than ever was done for him: Surely 'twas not for his ill behaviour, but his returning, that thus ingratiated him: the fathers compassions out-vie his provocations. When God hath humbled a person or people, and brought them to his own terms, he is wont to double his blessings upon them, both spiritual and temporal, and to forget all former unkindnesses. 'Tis true, the Spirit of God speaks in Scripture after the manner of men, in ascribing to him that joy and content which is proper to man on the finding of lost jewels, or the happy return of dear friends after long and almost despairing expectations; but hereby he intimates, as we are capable of apprehending, how much he is pleased in the returning of poor penitent sinners, whatever their back-slidings have been. Now Sirs? Will you chuse rather to make sport in hell, than joy in heaven? shall the Devil and his companions rather laugh at you and hiss at your self-undoing madness, than God and Christ and the blessed Angels above should rejoyce over and for you! Had you rather be made the objects of the Devils scorns than of Gods delights? Again you will by your

return make joy in the heaven of the Church here on earth, and make glad the hearts of the poor children of God : how will they bless God with and for you, and rejoyce in you as in their own souls? and were you not better to comfort than to grieve them? would it not better please that God, who is so exceeding tender of them? *Matth.* 18. 6. and make better for your own comfort too another day, when you shall see them on the throne at last with Christ to judge the world?

*Mat.* 7. 7. *Thou hast but this one way to secure thy self.* Return and live, go on and die; and if but one way, then there is no choice, no place for debates, no consulting with flesh and blood, in vain to think of any other Saviour, or to hope for any other terms; miss here and thou art undone for ever, *There is but one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism, one God and one Mediator*: many deceivers, but one Saviour; many ways to hell, but one way to heaven. Resolve now what to do? thou must turn in time, or burn to all eternity. As there is but one physician, so but one way in general to be healed by him; the same law for high and low, for rich and poor; whoever will live must turn, and that in season and in sincerity. *Turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways, for why will ye die?*

*Mat.* 8. 1. *This is the only way to be blessed, and a blessing to the places and people among whom ye dwell.*

*dwell.* Is not every one for blessedness, *Who will shew us any good* is the great enquiry among men; but that few will learn the right way to real good, is the sad complaint of good men. But would'st thou indeed be blessed? ask thy own conscience, canst thou be blessed without God? can thy honours, riches, or pleasures make thee a happy soul? nay, canst thou come by these (such sorry blessings as they are) without God? and canst thou hope to find God to thy comfort without turning to him. 'Tis true, God will find thee one day, whether thou turn or not, when thou shalt not be able to hide thy guilty face from him; but a thousand woes to thee, if thou turn not till then. Oh sinner! why wilt thou not be bless'd? why shall not God be thy friend, and heaven thy portion? shew me a better friend, a better portion, and I will never sollicite thee more. Turn and thou shalt be blest, yea, and others shall fare the better for thy blessing; thou shalt be as a light in the midst of darkness, a blessing to the family, the city, the kingdom where thou livest; thou shalt be as a refreshing stream in a dry and barren wilderness, as *Lot in Sodom*, as *Joseph in Egypt*, as *Paul* to his companions, one of the precious stones, for whose sake God spares a provoking world, which is a dignity above all that ever *Alexander* or *Cæsar*, or any the highest Prince upon earth ever attained to.

If there be ever a spark of holy ambition to be found in thee, let this be a cogent motive with thee.

*Mot. 9.* *9. All these offers and possibilities of being healed shall shortly cease, and the wound prove for ever incurable.* The crisis of this disease is approaching, harden thy heart, despise thy physician, or trifle with him but a little longer, and thou shalt be numbred among the dead; thy filthiness shall never be purged till thou die: loyter on a few hours more, and the dismal shades of an eternal night shall inclose thee round, and shut thee out in utter darkness. Methink this should startle thee a little, if thou hast but thy right wits about thee. Oh sinner! which way doest thou look, that thou canst not see what haste thy flying hours make to consummate the period of thy appointed time, to see the tide of divine wrath surrounding thee, and intercepting thine escape; look behind thee, the waters are coming in upon thee, and those floods from which all the world shall not be able to deliver thee. When thou liest gasping on thy death-bed, and thy trembling soul begins to take her unwilling fare-well of thy shivering lips, then remember the offers that once were made thee, and the arguments that were used so long in vain with thee; but this will be no time to hope that thy heavenly physician shall begin his work on thy soul, when thy earthly physi-

physicians have done with their work on thy body; when the bridegroom is entered and the door shut, thou must despair of ever seeing it open more. Oh! who can express, who can conceive the horror of such a case? Were it but possible, though never so difficult, there were something to keep thee from utter sinking; but when thou shalt hear that dreadful word, *too late, & depart from me ye cursed*, thou shalt then understand in what a case thou art.

10. Be sure, thy wound will smart shortly *Mo. 10.*  
*after another manner than now it doth. In hell he* *Luke 16. 23.*  
*lift up his eyes being in torment.* When that  
 opium, which now so stupifies thy spiritual  
 senses shall have spent its soporiferous influ-  
 ence, and thy conscience shall awake, thy  
 wound shall bleed afresh, and the anguish of it  
 shall rack thy guilty soul, with other manner  
 of restless agonies than now thou art aware.  
 Yet (it may be) thou canst jest it out, and  
 mock at thy serious admonishers, scorning  
 their reproof, and condemning them for fools  
 or hypocrites: but as sure as thou now livest,  
 this frolic fit shall not hold long. O that thou  
 wouldst be prevailed with! that something  
 or other might effectually persuade thee to  
 consider thy latter end!

11. Those very calls (if now thou refusest to *Mo. 11.*  
 hearken) shall eternally witness against thee.  
 There is one that accuseth, yea, even *Moses* in  
 whom ye trust, John 5. 45. but there are many  
 that



that shall accuse thee; besides God and Angels and thy own conscience; all thy enjoyments, all thy duties, thy very prayers and confessions, all thy days of fasting and humiliation, all thy companions both good and bad, these very Sabbaths and ordinances, these hazards and adventures which thou now runnest to hear the word of God, these directions, these motives, which are now before thine eyes, are sounding in thine ears, every line thou hast read, every word thou hast heard, yea, heaven and earth shall appear to witness against thee; Hear O heavens and give ear O earth; bear witness how I have dealt with a company of Back-sliders, and how they have dealt with me. Believe it finner, there is a day at hand, when these things shall sit closer and heavier than now they do.

*Isa. 1. 2.*

*Mo. 12.* Lastly, If for all this or any thing else that shall be said or done to reclaim thee, thou art still resolv'd to abide thy mad choice, and to run the adventure, let the issue be what it will, in the name of that God before whose dreadful glory thou shalt shortly be arraigned, I do once more fore-warn thee, whether thou wilt hear, or whether thou wilt refuse, that the poisoned arrows of divine wrath are made ready on the string, and that eye that never miss'd its mark, is levelling at thee, the curse shall be thy portion, and inexorable vengeance shall shortly pursue thee down

*to thine own place from whence thou shalt never escape.*

But wretched soul ! must I write a *miserere mei* on thy doors , and leave thee thus shut up within the strong bars and bolts of an impenitent heart ? Is there no argument to be drawn from the *topicks* of faith, scripture, reason, sence, or experience that may be strong enough to persuade thee ; but must thou be left incorrigible and incurable after all ? Lord ! hast thou never an arrow in thy quiver that can pierce the scales of such a Leviathan ? Oh that I knew what vein to strike, what pill to prepare to deliver wilful sinners from their spiritual madness ! Once more I will adventure the loss of my labour ; my bowels are pained for thee, my brother, why may I not yet draw thee with the cords of a man, and recover thee by the melting arguments of love ? And oh that the spirit of God would speak an *Ephathah* to thy heart by the still voice of these gentler motives. I will not tire thee with many words more, because I will leave room for thy own thoughts to comment on it.

1. *Metbink the gracious and loving invitation of the Text should be enough. Return ye back-sliding children.* See, he doth not yet disown the relation of a *Father*, he yet treats thee as a *child*, and is loath to deal any other-wise with thee, than as a *father* : and yet lest this should not seem enough, he adds an ample

Mot. 1.  
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ple promise, *I will heal your back-slidings*; I will forgive and forget what ever your provocations have been, they shall no more be imputed to you, nay, they shall no more reign in you; do but return, and my doors, my arms, my heart stand all open to receive you. Oh sinner! how canst thou hear thy gracious God thus humbling himself to so vile a worm as thou art, and wounding thee for that which is his own, and thy heart not *echo* to his call with those in the Text, *Behold we come unto thee, for thou art the Lord our God*? Should thy king, or thy father, or thy friend, yea, or thine enemy ask twice for a cup of cold water, or a poor rag, of which thou hast enough to bestow? and canst thou harden thy heart against thy heavenly Father, who asks nothing of thee, but what will undo thee if thou keep, and offers thee that which is infinitely better in exchange.

*Mot. 2. 2. Turn from sin and you turn out of harms way.* The way of sin is a dangerous way, the great road, wherein the Devil walks, wherein the wicked roaves, and wherein Gods judgments pursue and overtake the sinner; where the Devil ranges up and down seeking whom to devour; never a soul passes this way, but falls under the cruel paw of this lion, nor any escape without an Almighty rescue, nor yet so without a wound. 'Tis the way of death and snares, a deep and dirty way, full of dead  
car-

carkases and poisonous stinks. Here the children of darkness ramble and reel and rage and wallow and fall and rise no more, here they go on, like mad men, sporting themselves in their own shame and misery; here are those that blaspheme their maker, that fill their mouths with oaths and cursing, lying, proud boasting, and all manner of filthy lewdness, that malign the ways of God, and smite with the fist of wickedness; and here the just vengeance of God is discovered against impenitent sinners, and his high displeasure against all unrighteousness: whomsoever he finds walking here, friend or foe, though not of constant allowed practice, but of infirmity, yet is sure to smart for it; all the harm that we had need to fear comes this way, here lie the arrows of the Devil's temptations, the arrows of sinful natures filthy ebullitions, the arrows of the wicked's persecutions, insinuations and examples, and the arrows of God's indignation: 'tis impossible once to step into this way and to escape more or less of these mortal shafts, much less to walk on in it. But now, turn from sin and you turn from harms way, let what will befall you in God's way, still you are safe: 'tis true; you may meet with some rough paths, bad weather, hard work and coarse usages from the world: but what then? all this cannot harm you, *In all these* Rom. 8. 37. *things we are more than conquerors: what though*

6. 2. 3. *though the earth be removed, and the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof, all this cannot harm thee, neither let it terrifie thee; this is one argument that God is on thy side. All these waves rise to their height and roaring from the confronting of the breath of God's spirit and of mens corruptions, Ego, nisi tumultus istos viderem, verbum Dei in mundo non esse dicerem, says Luther. I would never believe there were a God in the world, were it not for the enmity and opposition that is against godliness; but let earth and hell do their worst, thou art out of harms way while in God's way, and hast no need to fear any of these things.*

**Mot. 3.** 3. Turn to God and you turn

I.

1. *To the best of friends; the wisest, the richest, the readiest friend. It was prophesied of a back-sliding people of old, that when they had wearied themselves in following after other lovers in vain, then shall she say, I will go and return to my first husband, for then was it better with me than now, Hos. 2. 7. Oh that this prophesie might at length be fulfilled on the Back-sliders of the present generation. Sinner! thou knowest not what a friend thou lovest in departing from God; return and it shall be better with thee, not only as to thy condition in it self, but better to thy content and*



and satisfaction; thou shalt have *godliness with contentment*, which is *great gain*, 1 Tim. 6. 6. I could tell thee at large what a friend God is, but when I have said all that I can, I must end infinitely short of that which I speak of; do but turn in truth to him, and thy own experimental tastes of his love shall more convincingly satisfy thee, than it is possible for words to do.

2. *To an absolute and distributive all-sufficiency*; not to a cistern, but to a fountain; not to a creature, but to a God. 'Tis said of the *Scythians* in *Plutarch*, though they had no musick, nor vines among them, yet they had their gods; though alas! one good vine had been better than all their idol-gods: but the true and eternal God shall be thy portion; not only a full but an overflowing fountain, an all-sufficiency adequately suiting all thy necessities and capacities, a God that giveth liberally and upbraideth not. When the Spanish Embassador came to see the treasury of *Venice*, and astonish'd at the rarities and riches of it, he began to grope if it had any bottom, and being ask'd the reason, answers, In this, among other things, my great master's treasure differs from yours, in that his hath no bottom, as I find yours to have, alluding to his mines in *Mexico* and *Potosi*. In this, among many other things, the treasury of a Christian excels all those beggarly rarities of this

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*Clerk. Exam.*

this world, that it hath no bottom, it is a profound and inexhaustible treasure.

3. *To a God at peace. For I will forgive their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more, Jer. 31. 34.* Oh the blessedness and sweet tranquillity of a pardoned and justified estate, when none shall have any thing to lay to thy charge any more, all thy debts paid, the handwriting cancell'd, the damnatory sentence of the law repeal'd, threatnings turned into promises, frowns into smiles, wrath into love, and the curse into a blessing. Oh! what a burden is there gone, when the burden of sin, and that slavish fear that accompanies it is gone: no love like the love of reconciled friends. This is that which fills the soul with a peace that passeth all understanding.

4. *To a God in covenant. Turn O back-sliding children, saith the Lord, for I am married unto you, Jer. 3. 14.* Only turn, and thou shalt make him thine for ever. *I am my beloved's, and my beloved is mine.* Never had a loyal spouse a firmer interest in her faithful husband, than the returning penitent hath in God. *In a little wrath I hid my face from thee for a moment, but with everlasting kindness will I have mercy on thee, saith the Lord thy redeemer, Isa. 54. 8.* Peace with men, though never so firm, may be broken, and reconciled friends may again become enemies, but once make God thy friend by a sincere returning to him,

him, and I will be content to stand in thy stead, if ever he bethine enemy again. 'Tis true, he may hide his face, new transgressions may occasion new corrections and desertions, but *Non deseret etiam si deserat*, His loving kindness will be not utterly take from thee, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail. Heaven and earth shall pass away, but his covenant shall endure for ever. Oh sinner! canst thou fathom the height and depth of this priviledge? Canst thou comprehend what a happiness it is to be able to call God, thy God? It was taken as an act of royal favour from *Alexander* to his conquered enemy *Darius*, that he would have him (upon due subinssion) to take him not only for his Prince, but for his friend, *Memento non solum regi te, sed etiam tuo, scribere*. But how infinitely greater is both the honour and the comfort, to be able to call the King of Heaven *thine*?

*Psal. 89. 33.*

*Quint. Curr. l. 4.*

5. To the family of God, and therein,

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1.

1. *To the dignities of his family.* Thou shalt no more be accounted an alien, a stranger and a foreigner, but a fellow-citizen with the saints and of the household of God, *Eph. 2. 19.* a free denison of the new *Jerusalem*, a member of the royal family, no mote to be numbred among the dogs or the swine, as formerly, nay, nor among mere servants, but among the children, nor yet barely so, but among the heirs, *For if children, then heirs, heirs with God, and joynt-heirs with Christ*, *Rom. 8. 17.* Sirs! is this no honour? or is this honour merely fantastical and imaginary? or doth it seem much to you to bear a few present reproaches, and to wait for the manifestation of the sons of God! Would it not trouble you, should your heir for whom you have large possessions, despise the dignity of his birth-right, and chuse rather to receive the present daily or quarterly wages of a servant, than to wait for his inheritance? Oh that the blind world did but rightly understand what an honour and glory it is to be a child of God!

2. *To the priviledges and immunities of his family*, and that both temporal, spiritual and eternal.

2.

1. *Temporal.* All the world is thine, will this satisfy thee? if thou doubt it, see thy charter, *1 Cor. 3. 22.*

1.

*Whether Paul, or Apollo, or Cephas, or the world, or life, or death, or things present, or things to come, all are yours.* He that hath given Christ, hath with him freely given all things, *Rom. 8. 32.* Alas! how are these poor blind, low-spirited worldlings mistaken? fain would they have the world, but they go the wrong way to get it. One, that is of a martial lion-like spirit, *audax ingenij*, and having the advantage of archieving great attempts, hopes to win the world by the dint of his sword, and the stratagems of war: Another by treachery and dissimulation, seeks to get what others have fought for; another, that must be content to play at smaller game, crouches and cringes to his Prince or Patron; and hopes to flatter and shuffle a little of this dunghil into his bosom, prostituting both his morality, religion and conscience and all to obtain it; another gets into an office, and therein employs all the poor wit he hath, though by extortion, bribery and false accounts, to creep into the inheritance of a curse; another, being content with an honest trade, but not so well content with the honesty of his trade, resolves, if possible, to double his gains by all the slights and artifices that his calling is capable of; another, that seems to be made, like the ass, for a dead burden, cares not what drudgery he undertakes, but as one that is prodigal of his bones and blood, and of all the comforts of life, devotes body and soul to a scraping life, in hopes to share a little in that, which the whole rout is so eagerly scrambling for; another, mistrusting his own politicks, and too covetous to part with a pitcher of water, though it be to fetch up a whole stream from the fountain, will defraud his back and belly, as if he meant to pinch the world out of his own skin, and hoard up the spoils of his own flesh. Alas! how is this miserable world bewitch'd? When sinner? when wilt thou be weary and ashamed of thy fruitless undertakings? Is it the world thou aimest at? I tell thee again thou wilt never get it this way; thou mayest get enough indeed to sink thee, but never enough to satisfy, comfort, or profit thee. Yet if it be this world thou would'st have, turn, as thou hast

hast been here exhorted and directed, unto that God, who is the absolute Lord and disposer of it; but yet with higher and more sanctified aims and ends than these, and the world thou shalt have with less ado, but with more content and comfort, thrown in for an over-plus, and as the least part of thy portion; the world shall be thine, and all the fulness of it; only be content at present with that measure of its actual possession, which infinite wisdom and goodness sees most fit and convenient for thee; though thy civil title be but short, thy spiritual and invisible title shall be universal.

2. *Spiritual.* Do but turn and all things shall work together for thy good; the almighty wing of divine power shall be as the munition of rocks round about thee, to defend thee from the malice of Satan, and the power of his temptations. The holy Angels of God shall be thy guardians, and kept thou shalt be by the mighty power of God, through faith unto salvation. Thou shalt never have reason any more to doubt of thy heavenly Father's love, his love shall be engraven upon every enjoyment, and upon every cross; the peace of thy conscience shall be a continual feast to thee, the light of the Lord shall shine upon thy ways, thy soul shall be as the *Eden* of God, a fountain of gardens, a fruitful valley, where every grace that doth accompany salvation, shall be implanted and watered by the hand and blessing of the most high; thou shalt be all-glorious within, thy spiritual cloathing richer than that of wrought gold.

3. *Eternal.* Ah Sirs! I am here at a loss, and dare not look on that dazzling glory, which the very Cherubims are forced to cover their faces when they behold; afraid to speak of that ineffable happiness, lest by speaking I should rather reproach, than set it forth in the least part of its real excellency. Yet that I may do my utmost to persuade thee, give me thy hand and let me lead thee up, as it were, to the top of *Pisgah*, and shew thee some dark glimpses and cloudy *landships* of those mansions of glory and bliss, which are so far above the short reach of an eye of sense, prepared for



the Saints. And now, what shall I say? Open thine eyes and look round about thee, view the glorious and vast expansion of the heavens, see how beautifully they are bedeckt with innumerable hosts and wonderful variety of glittering luminaries; nothing upon earth can be extracted so pure, as to match the glory of the least of them; yet all these are but as the outer curtains, by which the inner glory is veil'd from the eye of sense. When God shall set open the gates of the everlasting kingdom, to receive the vessels of honour to the participation of his blessedness, these curtains shall be drawn away and tolded up, like a scroll, as not worthy to appear with the brightness of that empyreal glory. Here shall be the seat of thine eternal residence, the paradise of thy unmixed and uninterrupted pleasures. Here thou shalt put on thine incorruptible robe of state, and thy promised crown, all tears shall be wip'd from thine eyes; all errors, ignorance and mistakes from thy understanding; all fears and scruples, that now gravel thy tender conscience; all that turbulent rout of passions, those furious waves, that now ebb and flow, like the sea, and so often foam out their own shame; all those irregular lustings and uncircumcised wills of the flesh; all those bodily infirmities, under which thou art now ever and anon groaning; *every thing that doth offend*, shall be gathered out of this kingdom. Here thou shalt lay aside all thy dull humors, and sullen soul-depressing melancholy, and enjoy an everlasting jubilee. Satan with all his foul train of angels and instruments shall be cast into the bottomless pit, and confin'd to their eternal chains of darkness, and shall neither tempt nor persecute thee any more for ever. Here every infant-grace shall be full grown and attain to the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ; thy mourning weeds shall fall off like *Elijah's mantle*, and thou shalt put on the garments of praise, with the palms of victory and triumph. Yea, here thou shalt dwell in the presence and beatifical vision of God; here thou shalt enjoy the Father of lights and the Father of love, thy dear Redeemer, blessed Angels and fellow-Saints, and all

*Mat. 13. 41.*

*Eph. 4. 13.*

in the nearest and dearest intimacy of communion, that this glorified nature and capacities will admit. I tell thee I can but point now at a few things in a general way; what might have been further enlarged here, I shall for brevity sake, leave to be supplied by thy own meditations, and what thou may'st find elsewhere from others to this purpose. Now if what I have said be in this thy day by the blessing of God, effectual to persuade thee to what I have been hitherto exhorting, I have my end, if not, never expect to know to thy comfort; what that is that God hath prepared for those that love him.

And now I should here wind up this discourse, and give my pen a *quietus est* from her tiresome, yet pleasant service, but that I seem to hear some secret enquiries for a few marks of tryal, which also I am willing to do for the fuller consolation of some, and conviction of others, to prevent what I can, the miscarriages of poor souls on either hand. The great question is, How shall I know whether I am going forward or backward; growing in grace, or decaying? I shall answer it as fully, but as briefly as I can under these positions.

1. *True grace grows inward; not in circumference* *Posit. 1.* only, but in solid substance; it makes a soul to thrive at the heart: not like a bubble, that of a sudden is blown up with a smooth and glittering out-side, but within is nothing but mere air and emptiness. There are indeed too many that carry a great breadth in the external part of Religion, and whose growth seems to be great, but it is but like that of hollow trees, the more rotten they are at the heart, the more they grow in *cor-tice*, and swell in bigness; the top flourishes, and the bark is fair, and yet nothing in it but a bare shell. But now, with one that makes real growth and proficiency it is not so, he is sound in the inner man, and is no worse than he shews; he is not one of those that can pray against sin, but cannot hate sin; that can reprove it in others, but cannot forsake it himself. *I delight in the law of God after the inner man*, says the Apostle, *Rom. 7. 22.*

Eph. 3. 17.

Though there were a law in his members, that when he would do good evil was present with him ; though through the weakness of the flesh, and the power of temptations, he sometimes fail'd of that he aim'd at, yet there was integrity found in the inner man, *I have not wickedly departed from my God*, Psal. 18. 21. The Saints out-side is his dark side ; he lies here among the pots, but then is all-glorious within ; the violent wind of temptations, and the remaining dreggs of corruption sometimes draw a black and foul cloud over him, that he looks like the tents of *Kedar* ; but yet he is shining still within the veil ; Christ dwells in his heart by faith : but where Christ dwells, there both the Father and the Spirit dwell ; whence it comes to pass that the triangle of his heart is fill'd out in all the dimensions of it, without any vacuities or empty spaces, which makes a full and sound heart ; but where the world is embraced, which is at best but an empty shell, 'tis impossible the heart should be either full or sound. Now if thou would'st know whether thou art going forward or backward, growing in grace, or decaying, judge thy self by this rule ; What is thine inward heart growth ? 'Tis true, there is a growth, and that at the heart too, but the consequence of it is fatal, of which the Prophet speaks, *Isa. 6. 10. Make the heart of this people fat* : the fatness of the heart denotes its stupidity and security, its pride, wantonness, untractableness and incurableness : a fat heart makes a lean soul. This is one of the saddest, yet one of the commonest kinds of growth in the world. And remember this still, which hath been already said in other words, the heart is always growing, either increasing with the increase of God, or else grows more rotten and incurable. But this growth of the heart, being inward and invisible, doth not, of it self, so clearly evidence a persons case, but had need of something to demonstrate this work, whereunto that which now follows may subserve.

Posit. 2.

2. *True grace grows downward.* This is one property of the good seed, where it thrives, it takes root. This is the reason that seed withered which fell on the *stony places*,

places, Matth. 13. 6. *because they had not root they withered away.* The life of all lies in the root; hence it is that every part receives both its form and nourishment; if the root die, all dies with it; *If the root be holy, so are the branches,* if this be rotten, so is all that proceeds from it. *As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him, rooted and built up in him and established in the faith,* Coloss. 2. 6, 7. 'Tis true too, the root may die, and yet the branch not presently wither; the stem may stand, and the leaves continue a while fresh and green; but without a living and firm root, there is no fruit nor standing long, no establishment in the faith; when the Sun arises, farewell the forward flourishing verdure of the grass on the house-top; when the storm comes woe be to the house, whose foundation is on the sand. Well then! if thou would'st know whether thou art growing or dying, look to thy root. But seeing the root lies under ground, as it were, fixed in the earth, and consisting of divers branches, thou must be the more diligent in examining.

1. Of what kind that seed is that the field of thine heart is sown with; is it wheat, or tares? the orthodox doctrine of the Gospel, pure Scripture-truth, or errors, schism or superstition? be sure the weeds will take root as well as the principal grain. God takes notice of this, that he had planted his vineyard with the *choicest vine*, Isa. 5. 2. and sown his field with *good seed*, Matth. 13. 27. and the Apostles were careful to lay no other foundation, than pure Gospel-verity and simplicity, and anathematiz'd all those that should presume to subvert or adulterate it, by adding to, or taking from it. Look to this then in the first place, that thy foundation-work be not *hay and stubble*, a bundle of heretical, erroneous, schismatical, or superstitious principles; bring that doctrine thou hast been instructed in, to the test of Scripture and right reason; if thy seed be not of the right kind, its growth cannot be good. Do not tell me that thou learnedst it of such and such, who are both learned and godly; but as

the noble Bereans, search the Scriptures whether these things be so.

2. 2. How the ground was prepared for the receiving this seed. Cast the best seed in the world upon a rock, or among thorns, or an untilled field, and it comes to nothing: the plough must go before the seeds-man; the castigatory pedagogy of the law before the noble institutions of the Gospel, *John the Baptist* before Christ. This is God's ordinary way, first to strike down, before he lift up; to begin the work of conversion by sound and piercing convictions; as it was with the Goaler, *Acts* 16. 30. with Paul himself, *Acts* 9. 6. and Peter's shearers, *Acts* 2. 37. *Break up your fallow ground, and sow not among thorns, Jer.* 4. 3. Hath the fallow ground of thine heart been broken and sown in tears; or hath the seed been received only with joy, like that of the stony ground? I do not presume to determine what the degree of this contrition must be, lest I should seem to prescribe to the free spirit of Grace; but this I say, if there hath not been that lively and unfeigned sight and sence of sin, as hath effectually driven thee out of thy self, and made thee the vilest of all creatures in thy own sight, and thereby driven thee to Christ, as thy only refuge, both from the guilt and power of sin, thou art yet in thy natural and lost estate, and so uncapable of growing in grace, what ever thy profession, thy gifts, or performances be.

3. 3. How the seed hath quickned and rooted it self, and that both in thy judgment and affections. *In thy judgment.* Hast thou a clear and distinct understanding of what thou professest to believe? I do not mean a perfect clearness, without any clouds or darkness, or a distinctness without any hesitation or confusedness; but hast thou obtained *the full assurance of understanding?* or else, is this all that thou canst say for thy religion, thus and thus I have been taught, and thus long believed and practised! This is the judgment of such and such learned and holy men? nay, nor is it enough to be able to say, thus the Scripture saith: 'Tis possible thy Bible may be thine idol, as the Quakers are forward enough



enough maliciously to accuse us, and therefore blasphemously reproach it, and wickedly despise the sacred authority of it; for all thy notional knowledge of the Scripture, thy understanding may be spiritually darkened; there are many that can clearly and truly prove from Scripture, what they believe and practise as Christians, who may, in a sense, be said to be mighty in the Scriptures, and yet have not that *full assurance of understanding*, which the Apostle speaks of, *to the acknowledgment of the mystery of God, and of the Father, and of Christ*; cannot adventure their *all*, nor it may be a small part of their *all*, upon what they profess so clearly to understand and confidently believe. Thy understanding must be enlightened, not only externally, by the Word, but internally, by the Spirit, or else the light that is in thee is but darkness, and thy root is dead, while it seems to live. *In thy affection.* This will naturally and necessarily follow the sanctified judgment, the affections are *potentia sequaces*, hand-maids to the judgment; if that be sanctified, these are ready to follow the ducture of it from the same sanctified principle, and then are the truths and ways of God most satisfactorily sweet to the soul, when the affections duly follow the understanding. But where this order is inverted, and the affection goes alone without the judgment, zeal without knowledge, the estate of that soul cannot be good. The sound heart doth not believe because he loves, but loves because he believes.

*Posit. 3.*

3. *True grace grows upward.* From a sound root there springs a thriving stalk, which is alway ascending and climbing heaven-ward, until it come to its full measure and height. If thou art a plant of God's own planting, thy growth is heaven-ward, and every ordinance, every duty, every mercy, every cross, like *Jacob's ladder*, helps thee thitherward; thou art in a rising way, hast gotten loose from the world, and every weight which was wont to press thee down and keep thee so low, that now thou canst mount up, though, it may be, not with that perfect freedom and fulness of comfort, as thou desirest, yet thy wings are imp't, and

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growing stronger and stronger; thou findest nothing here, but what thou could'st willingly bid farewell to, that thou might'st enjoy God, and be perfectly delivered from this body of sin and death. God and Christ, though yet at such a distance from thee, are more to thee than all the present enjoyments of this lower world; heaven is thy home, and there thy treasure, thy heart, thy conversation is; thou hast learn'd to use the world as if thou us'd'st it not; thy heart is gone, not merely beaten off by the violence of those storms, that imbitter it to thee, but drawn off by the cords of divine power and love, gone, not of force, but of choice; all the beauty of these things is turn'd into vanity with thee; that which once thou wert ready to adore and madest thy idol, now thou art asham'd of, and seest no excellency in. And the longer thou standest in God's vineyard, the taller thou growest; every day adds something, though in an indiscernable manner, still moving heaven-ward, though, it may be, but slowly. Now if thou would'st know what to judge of thy growth, try it by this mark; art thou growing heaven-ward or earth-ward? 'tis too ordinary among men, when they grow old, to stoop and bow, not only their faces, but their hearts toward the earth, their minds, and affections, and discourses are more carnal and earthly; their souls as well as bodies smell of the earth; the longer they live, the greater strangers to God: this sadly discovers which way they are bent, and where their home is. But art thou growing upward, into fuller acquaintance and communion with God? if not in sensible enjoyment, yet in fervent and unfeigned longings and desires after him? If heaven be thy home, the nearer home the clearer sight of it, or at least the stronger influence it hath on thee. The last miles are wont to seem the longest to the weary traveller.

*Posit. 4.*

Lastly. *True grace grows onward.* It presses on, if by any means it might attain unto the resurrection of the dead. It is not a going from duty to duty, or from ordinance to ordinance, as the drone from flower to flower; but a growing from grace to grace. *This one thing*

thing I do, forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, Phil. 3. 13, 14. He hath a race before him, and his life lies at stake, therefore he strips himself and is in earnest, resolves that nothing shall discourage him, whatever may disquiet him: Though such be his natural weakness, the malice of his spiritual enemy, the badness and unevenness of his way, the frowardness of his companions; and those many disasters that befall him daily in his race, that his slips and falls are many and dangerous, and it be scarce discernable sometimes whether he be going forward or backward, yet both his face and his heart is still set heavenward, his eyes look straight on, and that way he earnestly bends his course, which by degrees he finishes and wins the prize. Though he often fall, yet those very falls make him the more watchful, and the more industrious. The more he hath erred in judgment, being once convinc'd of it, (which he doth not obstinately resist neither) the more he sets himself to study the great truths of God, that he may not always be as a babe, in Christ, depending wholly on the breast, for the milk of the first and plain principles, being unskillful in the word of righteousness, but may have his senses exercised to discern good and evil, truth and falsehood, and *an ear that trieth words, as well as a* Job 34 3. *mouth trieth meats*; that he may not be like a child in understanding, tossed to and fro with every wind of doctrine. The more he hath fail'd in any duty, either of active or passive obedience, the more experience he gets of his own insufficiency, and of Satan's malice and subtilty; the stronger he grows to bear the burdens, not only of his own, but of others infirmities; the more serious diligence he uses, and the more care he takes for the future to walk with God fully: so that his *Motto* is that of the Palm-tree, *Depressus resurgo*, the more knocks, and bruises, and difficulties he meets with in his training, like the true *Lacedemonian*, the harder souldier he makes, and the more universally accomplished for all the duties of his warfare. Weigh  
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your selves now in this ballance, if you would know whether you are going forward or backward, growing or decaying. I shall add no more, but commend you to God, and to the word of his grace, which is able to build you up, and to give you an inheritance among them which are sanctified. Now to him that is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be glory and majesty, dominion and power, now and ever. *Amen.*

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A BRIEF

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